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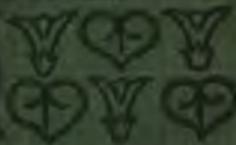
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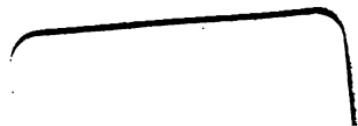
BREAK DAY TALES

BY FRANK
WEST &
ROLLINS



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BREAK O' DAY TALES



BREAK O' DAY TALES

BY

FRANK WEST ROLLINS

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1894

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
MISS STILLINGS	I
THE STEAM INTERLUDE	31
JOINING THE CAVALRY	91
THE BISHOP'S FIFTH	150
THE MAGIC FLASK	178



MISS STILLINGS.

“ When early morning's ruddy light
Bids man to labor go,
We haste, with scythes all sharp and bright,
The meadow's grass to mow.”

So sang the president of the Durham Electric Light Co., as he stood before his glass, shaving. Through the open window blew the gentle breeze of a June morning, while out among the trees and flowers the birds were singing gaily. The president was happy; indeed, he was always happy. The moment he was out of bed in the morning he began to sing, and, no matter how dreary the day or

arduous his work, the music that filled his heart found utterance through his lips. His housekeeper always knew when he was up, for his rich, though untrained, voice filled the house the moment his eyes were open. She often warningly told him, "Sing before breakfast, cry before night;" but he laughed her superstitions to scorn, and daily disproved them.

Mr. Charles Donnell dressed himself carefully, and then went out on the lawn among the rose-bushes, to breathe in the glorious freshness of the morning and to bask bare-headed in the sun, whose rays were as yet tempered by the dewy dampness of the night. He strolled, whistling, about among the shrubs, examining a young tree here, and brushing off a bug there, stopping at his favorite rose-bush to pluck a bud for his buttonhole. At last his housekeeper came out to say that

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breakfast was ready, and picking up the morning paper from the step, he read it as he slowly ate his fruit.

As he stepped from his door, cane in hand, erect, clear-eyed, firm in his gait, he was the very picture of the successful business man; clean-minded, clear-headed, well governed, well set up, resolute. Humming a song, he started down the street. For every one he met he had a kind word, a hearty greeting, or a cordial smile. His course was a very path of sunshine. It mattered not the man's dress or station, he bowed cheerily to the driver of a coal wagon, and stopped to shake hands with a poor Irishman digging a trench.

Twenty times he was stopped to discuss some different project in which he was interested. For each he had a ready answer, for each a solution of his difficulty.

At last he reached the spacious offices of the Durham Electric Company, of which he was the head. Down between the long lines of desks he passed, exchanging a word with each clerk or stenographer, asking after a sick babe or advising about a change of residence, always pleasant, always thoughtful, always self-forgetting. No wonder his employees worshipped him, no wonder every head was raised, no wonder every face wore a smile of greeting. Not one of them but had reason to remember his quietly performed deeds of kindness.

It's "Erminie" day to-day, said the head book-keeper to his assistant, as an air from that opera floated out from the president's private office, who was opening his mail. The effect was peculiar. In a moment, from every corner of the big office, the soft refrain could be heard,

either whistled or sung. The music for the day was established, and all day long the various tuneful airs from that charming opera were passed back and forth from private office to book-keeper's desk, from the book-keeper's desk to the cashier's cage, and on down the line of clerks and stenographers, till they died away with the office boy.

The messenger boys, telegraph boys, mail carriers, and in fact every one who entered the office caught the infection, and went out with the air of the moment on their lips, and so it spread through the town.

But all the time work was vigorously going on, the president working hardest of all. It sweetened toil, it drove away dark and brooding care, it softened hard human nature. Strangers stopped on the threshold astonished, those familiar with the office did not notice it.

Every morning the president pitched the key for the day, and furnished the motif which was to govern the day's work and to which it was to be attuned. It was always different, but always good.

President Donnell was a highly successful man. Whatever he undertook succeeded, but it was because he did not know the word fail; he never gave up; he looked disaster in the face, and knocked it out with his strong right arm. No one but his clerks knew how hard he worked, nor the enormous amount of work he accomplished in a short business day. The envious said his success was luck, but I have noticed that the successful man has always at some time in his life done a large amount of hard, painstaking work.

Durham was one of those peculiar New England cities, containing very few man-

ufacturing interests, the population largely made up of well-to-do people, poverty nearly unknown, a few kind-hearted women under the guise of a charitable society, working hard every year to relieve distress which did not exist, and highly delighted when they could find a man who was back on his rent or short of wood. The people were very conservative, very slow, very honest, very reluctant to part with anything old, or accept anything new. They generally woke up after the procession had passed, and instead of getting into the band wagon, had to content themselves with the clown and the Shetland pony.

Now Mr. Charles Donnell was a different kind of man. How in the world he ever came to be born in such a town is one of the unexplained mysteries. He must have harked back to some remote

and more progressive ancestors. Progress stood out in great letters of flame all over him. He loved new things, new inventions, new people, new schemes. He was ready for anything. He got up in the morning, and before his neighbors were awake he had lived a day. His blood flowed, it did not mildly circulate. Life, life, movement, action!

To his townspeople he was a phenomenon, a terror. Not one thing that he had undertaken but they had prophesied failure for, and rather hoped for it; it irked them to see a man so energetic. Every time he succeeded, and they finally and reluctantly acknowledged that they had been wrong and he right; but it did not make them any wiser.

The town had lain dormant till it felt his masterful hand. He told them they ought to have a public library, and they

all agreed that it was a necessity, but it couldn't be done. He took the matter in hand, and at the next city election got a ticket elected pledged to the idea. Result, a fine public library. A hospital was wanted, but all acknowledged that there was no way to get it. Mr. Donnell canvassed the town, found a rich old woman with no heirs, and got practically her whole fortune. The hospital was built and endowed. A few daring people had hinted at the desirability of a public park, but they had quietly retired when informed that it was expensive, unnecessary, and injurious to the morals of the young. Mr. Donnell, however, caught at the idea, bought a pond in the suburbs, surrounded by forests and wild land, improved it, laid out paths, drives, flower-beds, put boats on the pond, in fact, made a park out of it, without say-

ing "by your leave" to any one. He then proposed to sell it to the city for just what it had cost. Of course the grey-beards objected, and fought the project; but they were downed by the children and mothers, and the offer was accepted and the city had its park.

So it was with the soldiers' memorial building, the gate-way to the cemetery, the macadamized roads, the drinking fountain, the statues of famous citizens, the new city hall, the high school, the armory. All owed their inception, their completion, to the tireless energy, the compelling mentality of the president of the Durham Electric Light Co.

Mr. Donnell had been offered every office in the gift of the city, but had promptly declined. He seemed to have but one ambition, and that was the good of his fellow-men and the improve-

ment of the city. There was one aim though, of which he never talked, but which he had distinctly in mind, and that was the consolidation of all the municipal service companies into one corporation, of which he was to be the head. By municipal service companies I mean the water company, the gas company, the electric light company, and the street railway company. But there were great obstacles in the way. He, himself, controlled the electric company, and the street railway company, but the gas and water companies had been established by a former resident, who had passed away, leaving these large and valuable properties to his sole heir, a girl of twenty at the time. The management of these properties had been for several years in the hands of a hard-headed, stern old man named Beasley, who ran

them on the same old-fashioned, narrow lines that prevailed in the place. Beasley scorned innovations, changes, new ideas. When water gas was introduced all over the country, and was demonstrated to be better and cheaper than coal gas, he turned his back upon it contemptuously, and kept his old-fashioned retorts running in the good old-fashioned way. It did no good to show him that he could manufacture a better gas for fifty per cent. of the cost, and as for reducing the price to the consumer, why, if the people didn't want the gas they could go without.

Donnell knew well that it was useless to approach him on the subject of consolidation, and so bided his time. But he looked longingly at those tempting properties, lying fallow and undeveloped. He wondered what kind of a woman the

owner was, and whether he could get any nearer her than to Beasley. He had never seen her since she was a child. She had been away at school for years, and when her education was completed had gone abroad, where, as far as he knew, she was still. Miss Stillings was an unknown quantity in Durham, a sort of myth, to whom they all paid monthly tribute. That she was very rich goes without saying, and they all supposed, very arrogant and proud. You see they judged her by her agent.

Mr. Donnell's scheme was to put all four of these municipal companies into one corporation, to be known as the Durham Consolidated Municipal Service Company. Under one management expenses could be tremendously reduced, and the service very much improved, while the charges to the public could be

almost cut in two. It was a glorious, a tempting, scheme to a man of his calibre, but it seemed far off now.

It happened one day that Mr. Donnell's housekeeper and main stay gave out, and announced that she must go away for a rest. This resulted in a temporary closing of his house, and his taking up his quarters at a hotel. The president had never found time to fall in love. He respected women, had helped many, was considered the best catch in town, but was profoundly unconscious of it. A whist party was given by a family residing at the hotel, to which he was invited. Having nothing pressing to do, he went.

Among the guests was a young woman of twenty-five, who was introduced to him as Miss Edgerton. It was his fortune to have her for a partner, and he found himself enjoying the game fa-

mously. Between the deals he carried on an animated conversation with his partner, whom he found very intelligent, thoroughly posted, and a splendid conversationalist.

She was not pretty, that was not the word, she was fine looking, distinguished looking. So he said to himself, as he made mental notes. She had a well bred air, an appearance of knowing what she wanted, and of being able to get it. He was so much interested in her that at the end of the game he drew her to a divan, and talked with her for an hour.

He found that she knew a great deal about his favorite hobbies, could tell him much about the systems of street cars in use abroad, had visited many of the best lighting plants, both in the United States and in Europe; could talk intelligently of fuel gas, coal gas, and water gas; was

au fait of the latest devices for pumping water, and the most improved engines

It was an hour of pure delight and, as he thought of it afterwards, he said to himself, that "there was a woman a man could marry and make no mistake." He made inquiries, and found that she was to stay at the house for some time, at which he rubbed his hands, and while he sang "When a man marries his troubles begin," he wrote to his housekeeper that she need not hurry back.

While Mr. Donnell was thus writing, Miss Edgerton was, strangely enough, questioning her friend about him. What she learned was practically what you have already learned, except that the relater went a little more into details. She heard how he had taken the little crippled newsboy, and put him through the public school, and then sent him to col-

lege; how he had paid off the mortgage on the home of the blind man who played on a tin whistle at the depot, how he had furnished the money to a poor inventor to perfect his invention and forgotten all about it, and how the poor inventor had walked into his office at the height of a panic, when Mr. Donnell was at the end of his rope and about to be engulfed, and handed him a check for \$50,000, his half of the sale of the invention; how, when the great strike took place on the electric plant, and no one was left to run the big Corliss engine, he had gone to the works, donned overalls and jumper, and safely run the mighty machine all night, so that the city might not be left in darkness. She was also told of his great aim and ambition to consolidate the municipal companies.

"Why does n't he do it, then?"

"Oh! but he can't, you know. The water and gas companies belong to a Miss Stillings, who has n't ever been in town for ten years, and who, they say, wouldn't sell a foot of pipe. She must be a queer make-up to let such an old curmudgeon as Mr. Beasley run her property. He's mean enough to eat dirt."

And so the conversation ran on, until Miss Edgerton was thoroughly posted on all matters relating to Mr. Charles Donnell.

From this time Miss Edgerton and Mr. Donnell seemed to run against each other, quite accidentally of course, nearly every day. They met in the elevator, in the hall, at table, and in the evening in the rooms of their mutual friend. They seemed wonderfully congenial, and there

was no denying the fact that Mr. Donnell was getting very much interested.

The clerks in the office noticed that his songs were more tender, more of the Thomas Moore order than before, and wondered at it. He forsook operas and devoted himself to "Toujours ou Jamais," and like melodies. Of course the office followed suit, in sympathy with the president, and one of the young lady stenographers ventured to whisper to another that "the president must be in love."

Mr. Donnell really had the matter under serious consideration, and, like the resolute, fearless man that he was, made up his mind that he was right, and that he would push matters to a conclusion.

He sought for a favorable opportunity, and found it unexpectedly. He had invited Miss Edgerton to accompany him to the theatre. They left the house in a

cab, and it was with a delicious sense of her proximity that he noticed the delicate perfume that had become familiar to him. They spoke in a desultory manner as the carriage rolled along, but each seemed occupied in thought. Suddenly the carriage stopped, and Mr. Donnell put his head out to see what the matter was. They were in a blockade; a street car had come to grief, and they could move neither forward nor backward. As it was a rainy night, there was nothing for it but to wait till the car should be repaired. Mr. Donnell was secretly pleased, though he outwardly regretted the delay.

The light from an electric lamp faintly penetrated the cab, and by it he could just see Miss Edgerton's face, and catch the glimmer of the diamond at her throat.

Mr. Donnell was busy with his

thoughts, which were evidently happy ones, for, unconscious of the impropriety, he was humming a song. He could not see the quiet smile which played upon the lips of his companion.

At last he ceased his music suddenly, and taking his resolution in both hands, he said :

“ Miss Edgerton, the watchword of my life has been consolidation. In all my business efforts I have worked in that direction, believing that it was the tendency of the times, and was of great benefit to a community. Now, if it is a good thing in business, why not in life? In other words, will you consolidate, that is, pardon me, will you become my wife?”

Miss Edgerton tried to see his face, and by the fitful glare, caught a glimpse which satisfied her that he was perfectly

sincere, and that this peculiar proposal was simply his business-like way of doing things. She was silent for a long time, during which he patiently waited, though his heart beat rapidly.

"Mr. Donnell," she answered at last, "I believe you are honest in your proposition, and right in your views as to the tendency of the times, but I am not quite ready to marry yet. There are certain things I have to do before I can consider my own comfort and happiness. I may say to you frankly, however, that I am gratified and honored by this offer, and I do not wish you to think I throw it lightly aside. Until I have made certain investigations, I shall not marry."

She said this quietly, and he could not see the tremor of her lips, nor her heightened color. He took her refusal with a heavy heart, but like a man. He made

no murmur, and comported himself with more than his usual gentleness, kindness, and courtesy for the balance of the evening, never once reverting to the subject. But he would have been surprised had he looked into Miss Edgerton's room after her return from the theatre, for she seemed merry as a lark, and sang softly to herself, while happy tears filled her eyes.

"Will you consolidate? Will you consolidate?" she cried, "Who ever heard of such a proposal? And he was serious, too," and she laughed at her image in the glass, as she ran the comb through the masses of her dark hair.

Mr. Donnell forgot his song that night. He looked thoughtfully at his image in the mirror. "Yes," he said, "I hadn't thought of it before, but I'm growing old. Strange it had not occurred to me

before. Why, I 'm thirty-five, the best part of my life has gone, and what is there about me to attract a beautiful girl like that! I only thought of my own love, and believed I could compel hers, as I have compelled men in business. But this is another matter. The dear girl let me down as easily as she could. What did she mean by the things she had to do, the investigations she had to make before she thought of marriage? Ah, well, that is none of my business. All I need to know is, that she is not for me ;" and Mr. Donnell went to sleep that night with a prayer for her happiness on his lips.

The next morning he went out early, and walked to his own home, where he picked a magnificent bunch of roses, which he sent to Miss Edgerton's room, as a sort of mute apology for his pretension, Then he went to his office, and

plunged into his work with all his might. "Something is wrong with the president," whispered the cashier to the book-keeper. "Look at his face, and he has n't whistled a note." A melancholy silence fell upon the office, the sun refused to shine that day; yet the president was gentler, kinder than ever, and before he left the office handed the head book-keeper a sheet of paper containing a salary list for the ensuing year, in which all the clerks had received substantial increases. This was his way of braving adversity and trouble. There was not a clerk who did not sympathize by action with his secret sorrow.

The result of this defeat was, that his cherished scheme became more and more important to him, and he evolved all sorts of plans for bringing about a consolidation of the companies, only to be

put aside as impracticable. He even went so far as to write a letter to the owner of the gas and water companies, Miss Stillings. This he sent, care of Mr. Beasley, and he had grave doubts of its ever reaching her.

He met Miss Edgerton, who was still at the hotel, quite often; but avoided intruding upon her. One evening, as he was smoking a cigar in the office, Mr. Beasley happened in, and Mr. Donnell, who never lost an opportunity, engaged him in conversation, and gradually led up to his favorite plan.

Beasley, as usual, would have none of it. He had too good a place himself to jeopardize it by consolidation. Donnell urged the advantages to both properties, and requested Beasley to appoint a time for an interview, when they could go into the matter more carefully.

Just as he made this request Miss Edgerton passed them on the way to her room. She looked sharply at Beasley, who seemed very much disconcerted, and bowed effusively, as Donnell raised his hat.

"Do you know Miss Edgerton?" asked Mr. Donnell, in surprise.

"I have met her," answered Beasley, gruffly. "Well, if you want to talk this matter over come to my office to-morrow morning at ten, though I warn you it's no use," and with a curt good-night, he left the house.

The president, somewhat encouraged by this interview, called at the office of the gas and water company as agreed, and met Beasley on the steps, and walking into the office, he plunged into his subject. Once more he went over the familiar ground, presenting all the advantages, the savings, the benefits to the

city and the owners. Beasley let him have his say, and then, without trying to refute his arguments, said the whole thing was impossible. Miss Stillings was amply satisfied with her property and its management, and did not care to make any consolidation.

Right in the midst of his refusal a door at one side, which Mr. Donnell had noticed partially ajar, opened wide, and to his great astonishment, Miss Edgerton came quickly into the room, her face a-glow, her eyes shining. Beasley started in amazement and dismay, while Donnell sprang to his feet, saying,—

“Miss Edgerton!”

She walked around the table resolutely and extended her hand, while Beasley advanced a step as though to stop her, but a glance from her eyes held him rooted to the spot.

"A short time ago, Mr. Donnell, you made me a proposition to consolidate. If the offer is still open, I accept," and she smiled through tears.

"Done!" said the president, "though I am completely mystified. However, I don't care how the result is reached. I have always been in the habit of dealing with facts."

"And you must understand, Mr. Donnell, that you have to take the gas and water company with me. I have been acting a part here. My real name is Stillings. I own these properties. I had not seen them for years, and came here incognita to investigate matters, known only to Mr. Beasley. I happened to be here this morning waiting to see Mr. Beasley, and when I heard you coming in I stepped into the next room. I, of course, overheard all the conversation.

I have made all the investigations I care to."

Mr. Donnell's eyes danced with delight, while Beasley with sullen face slunk from the room.

There was music in the office of the Durham Electric Co. the next day.

THE STEAM INTERLUDE.

On a bold, rocky point, pushing its way fearlessly out into the ocean, stood a low, broad-verandahed house, with doors and windows wide open, and the scent of roses and the sea breeze blowing alternately through. It was a warm June morning, and the heavens ran clear and blue, from zenith to horizon. Away off on the sea line an occasional sail moved almost imperceptibly, and the waves beat gently on the rocks below.

Close to the edge of the cliff, indeed almost hanging over it, was one of those great gnarled willows, and around its base a seat had been built many years

before, as was evidenced by the hundreds of names and initials cut in the wood. On this June morning the seat was occupied by a man long past his prime, yet erect and soldierly in his bearing. His snow-white hair was closely cut, and his keen, gray eyes looked out in a questioning way from beneath his overarching brows. His cheeks had still the dark bronze they had worn in earlier years, and which time could not efface. He looked like a sailor, and had been one. All his life had been spent on the deck of a man-of-war, and now, as old age crept on and active service was no longer possible, he withdrew to this lofty promontory, where he could watch the ever coming and going sails, and live over again, in memory and reminiscence, his eventful life.

On the seat beside him, holding a tele-

scope almost as long as himself, was a sturdy little fellow of ten, a grand-child, and he was importuning the old man for something.

“Grandpa, please tell me that story about the steam.”

“Well, my boy, I’ve told that to you before.”

“Well, I want to hear it again. Please tell it to me, grandpa.”

The old man smiled, patted the boy on the head, and gazed reflectively off over the swelling waters. It was some moments before he spoke, but the child knew his ways and waited patiently.

“It was in the summer of 1905,” he began. “I was in command of the Gettysburg, one of those monster battleships. You know there is a picture of the vessel over the mantel in the parlor.

She was the largest vessel then afloat, but I won't try to give you the dimensions, as you are too young to appreciate them. She was covered with armor that was practically impervious to shot and unbreakable by collision or shipwreck, as it was made of composition, the secret of which was known only to the navy department, and which rendered it not only immensely strong, but also elastic, so that a shot from the heaviest gun would rebound from it like a rubber-ball. This armor was the despair of other navies, which had tried by fair means and foul to find out the secret of its composition, without success. Her armament of heavy guns for both all-around and for broadside fire was something unprecedented, and she also had the honor of being the first vessel to be armed with the then new electric rifles, which have

since revolutionized warfare. She had military masts, with rapid-firing guns mounted in armor-tops, but no sails. Her engine and boiler capacity, however, were enormous, and on her trial trip she had made twenty-seven knots an hour, which is railroad speed for so large a vessel.

“The summer of 1905! Years before you were born, or before your mother was born, my boy, and yet it seems but yesterday to me! I can scarcely realize till I get up and walk about, or look in the glass, that I am no longer a young man ready for life and action. The body is aged, but the heart, the heart is young. Those were stirring, busy times. We were engaged in building up our navy and extending our commerce, and our flag, which had been noticeable by its absence, was beginning to appear in every

seaport of the world. Our harbors were alive, our wharves piled high with merchandise, and the sound of the shipwright's hammer was heard from Florida to Newfoundland, from the Gulf of California to Vancouver, and also upon the great lakes. We led the world again! Our ships thronged the commercial ports, while the white sides of our men-of-war gleamed a joyful welcome to Americans the world over!

"As I said before, I was in command of the battle-ship *Gettysburg*, and we were a week out from New York on our way to the Pacific. How well I remember my feelings as we steamed down the harbor, accompanied by several vessels of the Atlantic squadron and by a multitude of steamers, yachts, and tugs. It was a grand sight and a proud moment for me. My ship was the finest the government

had ever built—indeed the finest in the world at that time. In fact, in armor and armament she was entirely unique, and, as I heard her great engines throbbing under me, and saw her massive armored bow tossing the waves from either side like playthings, I felt invincible. I thought, what a wonderful stride when steam replaced sails. And I gazed in awe at the great volumes of black smoke pouring from the funnels, and at the white, impetuous steam snorting from her escape-pipes.

"One by one the yachts and tugs were left behind, and accompanied by the men-of-war we steamed out by Sandy Hook, where, after parting salutes, they also turned their prows towards the harbor, and we were left to pursue our voyage alone. There was enough to do, however. The ship was new, and a

large part of the crew were raw hands. The crew was a large one, there being a total of officers, sailors, and marines, of over seven hundred. All the new material had to be broken in, and so the drills were constant. We were beginning a long voyage with few breaks. Our coal capacity was enormous, and we could practically sail around the world without touching a single point.

" Notwithstanding the size of our ship, she was easily handled, for we had every mechanical appliance for lessening labor. The anchor was raised by steam, the pumps were worked by steam, the wheel was controlled by steam, and even the dishes were washed by steam. The vessel was lighted by electricity, and could, by means of multitudes of wires laid in the metal of the vessel, be so brilliantly illuminated, both outwardly and

inwardly, that the darkest night was like noonday. These wires were so contrived that they could be brought to a white incandescence by means of electricity, and thus furnish the light. We had, of course, electric search-lights in abundance, one at the bow, one at the stern, one on either side, and one in each of the three tops. The guns could be fired from the conning-tower by means of electricity; electric signals and telephones connected every part of the ship; the ventilation and heating were run by electricity, while the revolutions of the screw were registered in the pilot-house and engine-rooms by an electric contrivance; our ice was made by an electric motor, which also distilled our drinking-water, and the speed the vessel was making was ascertained by an electric log. These were all wonderful scientific inventions at

the time of which I am writing, but of course, as you know, my boy, are dwarfed by the marvelous inventions of the present day. In short, there was little for the men to do except to direct and control the work of these two elements, steam and electricity, drill, paint and scrub, and stand watch. Of course, in case of action, there would be enough for them to do in handling the immense pieces of ordnance and the more lively secondary battery.

"The days passed pleasantly. I was full of my ship. I watched her every motion with love and admiration, as a mother watches her child. My officers were splendid fellows, and as full of admiration as I was for the magnificent piece of mechanism. We had one or two old officers aboard, however, who had served all their days aboard the old-time

wooden frigates, with their tall, tapering masts, and vast, swelling sails, and they could not get over their dislike for our poor apologies for masts and entire lack of sails. They shook their heads dubiously when we raved over the speed we were making, and one of them said,—

“‘ It’s all very fine and pleasant as long as everything goes well with your machinery; but if that gives out, where are you?’

“‘ But we have three sets of engines and boilers and screws, and if one gives out we can get along very well with the other two,’ I replied.

“‘ But suppose they all give out?’

“‘ Oh! that’s not likely to occur. Who ever heard of such a case? Any-way, we won’t borrow trouble.’

“The days passed rapidly, filled as

they were with endless duties, and every night our electric log showed the wonderful speed we were making, carrying us farther toward the equator. Great rolls of writhing, black smoke poured from the monstrous stacks and went streaming behind to the northern horizon, and the trembling throb of the triple screws forced the massive steel ram through the windy waters with irresistible impulse. I would stand on the bridge for hours together, watching the magnificent sight with a feeling of power, a sense of triumph over the elements, and a consciousness of superiority over old ocean which I cannot describe. What was there that could harm us? I feared no storm, no armed foe. I was never so happy in my life.

“ Day followed day, and still our speed never slackened. The great engines

kept at their work ceaselessly day and night. The busy engineers stepped nimbly about, tightening a nut here, touching a gauge there, oiling a valve or feeling of a crank-pin, and the clink-clank of the valve-gear was answered by the swish-swish of the pistons as they swept ponderously up and down, while deep down in the bowels of the ship the sweating stokers plied their shovels and fed the roaring red mouths, always open and sucking in the food by means of which they lived and performed their stupendous work.

“ But on the 29th day of August—how well I remember that day! and, in fact, how well the whole world remembers it! —when we were in latitude $4^{\circ} 15''$ N. and longitude $35^{\circ} 36''$ W., a marvellous and inexplicable thing occurred. It was in this way. The previous night had

been a peculiar one, and I had several times been called up by the officer in charge of the deck, who was worried by the peculiar appearance of things. There was no wind, but a very heavy sea suddenly arose, and the heavens glowed toward the north with a dull, red glow, as though a great conflagration was taking place at a distance. The men thought they could hear heavy reports, but I could not distinguish them. It was most peculiar and alarming, but with dawn all trace of the matter disappeared, although the sea still ran high.

“The sun rose hot and overpowering. We were now in the tropics, and every piece of metal was like molten lead to the touch. About 10 o'clock in the morning, as we were pursuing our undeviating way under a glassy sky, I noticed a slight diminution in the speed,—a slow-

ing-up of the screws. I was standing on the bridge at the time. This slackening of speed was so unusual (not having heard any command given), I stepped to the officer of the deck, who stood near the wheel, and asked him what it meant. ‘Have you ordered her slowed down, Mr. Parker?’

“‘No, sir; and I was just wondering what the trouble was.’

“I stepped to the speaking-tube connecting with the engine-room, and asked if they were slowing her. They replied in the negative. I then asked if anything was the matter with the machinery. There was nothing.

“‘This is strange. We are surely gradually coming to a standstill, are we not, Mr. Parker?’

“‘Yes, sir; unquestionably.’

“I was turning to speak to the quarter-

master at the wheel, when the chief engineer sprang onto the bridge.

“‘ Well, what does this mean,’ I asked curtly. ‘ Why are you stopping the vessel? Anything wrong?’

“‘ Not a lever has been touched, sir?’

“‘ What is the matter, then?’

“‘ That’s what troubles me. I can’t make out. I wish you would come below, sir.’

“ I followed him to the engine-room. The engines were still moving slowly and feebly, like a man whose breath is nearly spent. I ran my eye casually over the machinery, and glanced at the steam gauge.

“‘ What does that mean?’ And I pointed to the dial, which indicated but one hundred pounds of pressure, and the indicator of which was going steadily back towards zero, denoting reduction of steam pressure every moment.

"The engineer started, and gave a few brief commands to his assistants, who were gathered about. A hurried examination was made of the boilers, but nothing developed, and every instant the great pistons were going more slowly and laboriously.

"'This won't do,' I said. 'She will be at a standstill in a few minutes. Anything the matter with the firemen or fires?'

"'No, sir; Mr. Reed has just reported everything all right in the fire rooms.'

"'This is very mysterious,' said I, taking the executive officer away from the other officers, who were grouped around. 'I can't understand it.'

"'Nor I, sir. Is anything wrong with the machinery, do you think?'

"'Apparently not. The engineers are still examining, but everything seems

all right so far. I am certain that the trouble is with the boilers, or, at least, we can't make steam.'

"Just then, with a sort of sigh, the engines stopped altogether, and we looked at each other curiously. For a moment I stood stupidly staring at the machinery, but, bethinking myself that such an attitude would not do before the officers, and that something must be done, I turned to the chief engineer.

"'Make a thorough examination of the boilers; leave not a bolt nor valve without examination, and when you have finished report to me in person.'

"I then dispatched a trusted officer to examine the screws, and started, accompanied by the executive officer, on a minute tour of inspection myself. This getting disabled in the middle of the Atlantic was no joke.

"The men had aroused from the lethargy caused by the heat, and were standing around in groups, discussing the strange occurrence. They were conscious that something mysterious was happening. The great vessel lay motionless, rising and falling slowly on the long surges.

"It took half an hour to make the inspection I had ordered. During this time I looked things over carefully myself, but could find no explanation of the trouble. I returned to the bridge and awaited the report of my officers. In a few minutes the chief-engineer joined me.

"'Well?'

"'I can find nothing wrong, sir. The boilers and machinery seem to be in as good, if not better, condition than when we sailed.'

“ ‘ Put on forced drafts, and see if you can’t get steam enough to start her.’

“ And he went below. I waited impatiently for some movement. I listened intently for the first throb of the screw. Minutes dragged by, and a half an hour passed, but no sound broke the stillness. Volumes of smoke, shot with flame and sparks, tumbled from the funnels, showing that the fires were working well, but the screw did not revolve.

“ Impatiently I rang the bell to start her, and my reply was a call through the speaking-tube. ‘ What is it?’ I asked.

“ ‘ There’s not an ounce of steam,’ replied the chief engineer.

“ ‘ How are the fires?’

“ ‘ Never saw better ones. We ought to have pressure enough to drive her twenty knots an hour with the fires we have, but the water does not even boil,

though it is at a terrible heat. Never knew anything like it.'

"My officers were now gathered around me with anxious, concerned faces, while the crew gazed up at us with curiosity. Various suggestions were offered, but no solution of the puzzle could be found. It was morally certain that the machinery was all right, as the most minute examination had revealed nothing to account for the stoppage. Besides, we had three separate sets of engines and boilers, and they had all stopped at the same time and in the same manner. It was not likely that anything could have given out at the same moment in each. But the curious and inexplicable part of the thing was that we could not make steam—absolutely none. Followed by my officers, we repaired to the engine-room again, where a glance at the steam gauge told

52 THE STEAM INTERLUDE.

the story. The engineers were standing about, watching the gauge expectantly, and with puzzled faces.

" We then proceeded to the fire-rooms, and found the fires roaring, while the stokers crowded the furnaces with coal till they fairly roared and trembled with the heat. Still no steam. I put my ear to a boiler, but no sound indicated any presence of steam, or any boiling. I opened a cock, and scalding-hot water poured out, but no steam. I was non-plussed. The trouble was evidently with the boilers, or at least it consisted of an inability, from some mysterious cause, to make steam. We had sifted it down to that.

" Leaving instructions for the fires to be kept up at a white heat, I returned to the engine-room and awaited developments. By this time every soul in the

ship was on the *qui vive*. I had as good engineers as there were in the navy, if not in the world, and none of them had ever heard of such a case. How could such fires fail to make steam? The question was unanswerable. A visit to my cabin, and an examination of my books on engineering, failed to reveal a parallel case or any explanation of the matter. I was on my way to the engine-room again when I heard the look-out announce a sail. I thought to myself, perhaps she can assist us, and then it occurred to me how ridiculous it was. Who could help us in such a predicament? All we could do was to go on hunting for the trouble and continue our efforts to make steam.

"After all, I was more puzzled than worried, as I thought the difficulty could be only temporary, and we were in no

danger, at least for the present. The sea had quieted down and was like glass, with a long, swinging undulation on which the powerful fabric swam as buoyantly as a gull. The great white sides were reflected in the sparkling water, while the brass work was turned into iridescent gold in the morning sun. The only thing to be feared, as we were in the broad Atlantic, was a sudden storm, which might, without the use of our engines, leave the sailless hull at the mercy of the winds and waves. For a moment I regretted the symmetrical old wooden ships with their great white sails, on which I had taken my first lessons in navigation. Thinking over all these possibilities and contingencies, I turned thoughtfully to the deck.

“‘How does the sail bear?’ I asked of the officer of the deck,

“ ‘ Broad on the port beam, sir,’ he replied.

“ ‘ A glance revealed some dark object low down on the horizon in the direction indicated. What it was, it was impossible to tell from the deck.

“ ‘ Hail the lookout, Mr. Brace, and see what it is.’

“ ‘ He says it is a steamer, as he can see smoke, sir.’

“ ‘ How is she heading?’

“ ‘ She seems to be lying to, sir.’

“ ‘ Have a watch kept of her, and as soon as she is near enough, signal that we want to speak her.’

“ ‘ Aye, aye, sir.’

“ I then joined the engineers in their discussion of the problem, and it was an hour before I again went on deck; and during this time no sign of pressure had appeared upon the gauge. The first

thing I noticed, as I put my head above the companion-way, was that the ocean was still as smooth as a mill pond, and the sky as azure clear as a mountain stream. The men were gathered at the rail, gazing at the now clearly visible vessel. I started in amazement as my eye fell on her.

"She was lying beam on, about five miles off, and clearly visible to the naked eye. I saw at a glance that she was a man-of-war, and, seizing a glass, I made out the British ensign. She was of nearly the same class as ourselves, though not so large, and was one of the finest vessels in the English navy. There she lay, however, motionless, rising and falling on the long swells, while great masses of smoke tumbled in involuted columns from her stacks, and floated lazily to leeward. Seeing me on deck,

Mr. Brace approached, and informed me that he had signalled that we wanted to speak her.

“‘What reply did she make, and why does n’t she come within hailing distance?’

“‘She replied, “All right—we want to speak you.”’

“‘Tell them we are disabled, and ask them to come within hail.’

“In a moment the proper signal was hoisted, and it was quickly answered from the British vessel.

“‘She replies that her engines have stopped and that she can’t move,’ reported Mr. Brace.

“‘The deuce she does!’

“I turned to my officers about me, and we all remarked on the singularity of the circumstances of two of the finest vessels of the British and American

navies being disabled within a gun-shot of each other in the wide Atlantic.

"Thinking it advisable and courteous to confer with the commander of our neighbor, I signalled him that I would come aboard, and was soon speeding towards the man-of-war as fast as twelve oars could carry me. As we swept along I thought I noticed that the two vessels were a trifle nearer than they were when I had first come on deck, and laid it to the action of some current. The ship, as I discovered on approaching, was the *Destroyer*, a fact which I had already surmised, as I knew her well from descriptions and pictures I had seen. The gangway had been shipped, and as I stepped aboard I was received with every naval courtesy. I at once followed the commander to his cabin, where, after a

glass of wine, I broached the subject uppermost in my mind.

“ ‘I am in a quandary,’ I said, ‘and have come aboard, partly to confer with you about it, and to see if you can offer me any suggestions.’

“ ‘Why, I was about to order my boat away for the same purpose when you signalled me that you were coming aboard. I, too, am in a dilemma.’

“ ‘Well, it is singular. In fact everything that happens now is mysterious. However, I will tell you of my predicament, and then you can post me as to yours. This morning, about 10 o’clock, without any apparent reason, my engines stopped, and I have been unable since, with the hottest fires, to make an ounce of steam.’

“ As I spoke, the commander of the

English vessel looked at me in the utmost astonishment, and, springing to his feet, exclaimed,—

“ ‘ Why, man, that’s just what happened to me! Surely you are joking me ! ’

“ I sank back in my chair, paralyzed, and we stared at each other in speechless amazement.

“ ‘ I am not naturally a believer in the supernatural, but if this does not partake of the powers of darkness, I am mistaken, I said, when I could get my breath.
‘ What time did your engines stop?’

“ ‘ A few minutes past ten; in fact, the same moment yours did.’

“ Instead of gaining light by my visit I was more mystified than before. This settled the question that it was no local trouble with the engines, or boilers even, as it affected us at the same moment.

Could there be anything in the atmosphere of this particular locality which prevented the making of steam? For an hour we discussed the question, and cudgelled our brains; advanced theories, only to throw them over as untenable, and finally gave it up as a bad job. We were still talking when an officer entered the cabin, with an apology for intruding, and informed us that the two vessels were drifting uncomfortably near together.

"We hurried on deck, and, sure enough, the two great steel monsters were slowly but surely approaching each other. It was another case of attraction, such as has often been noted at sea. Two vessels in a dead calm will frequently draw towards each other without any visible cause or reason. But the collision of two such vessels as these must be avoided, and, springing into

my boat, I was soon on the deck of my own vessel.

"How to avoid the collision, which seemed imminent, was the burning question. I had no sails, and if I had had them there was no wind. The only way I could think of was to out boats and tow her out of harm. I gave the necessary orders, and in a few minutes all the boats were piped away. A hawser was run out at right angles to the bows, and all the boats were made fast to it in a long line. At a given signal they all pulled together, and the water flew and sparkled from the oars as the sturdy backs bent to their work. Glancing at the *Destroyer*, I saw that she was following suit, only that she was towing in the opposite direction, so as to pull the head around. I looked anxiously over the bows to see if we made any progress, but not a ripple

stirred around the ram. We were not moving. The boats had not moved her a foot. After ten minutes of tremendous efforts I communicated with the *Destroyer*, and asked that all together be tackled on to our line to see if all the boats could not move one vessel. This was done, but without effect. The combined strength of both crews had no effect on the great hull.

"Our relative position was unchanged, and we were every minute drifting nearer together. We were still several hundred yards apart, but the approach was as sure and deadly as though we were being warped together. It was fascinating, but terrible, to watch the sheet of intervening water growing narrower and narrower. I was at the end of my rope. We had no motive power, and were as impotent as though we were in the rapids below

64 THE STEAM INTERLUDE.

Niagara. We could now talk across the gap, and even hear the foot-fall of the men as they walked the deck of our unwelcome neighbor. The black muzzles of the *Destroyer*'s guns were looking right into our faces. My heart was like lead, for I knew what the effect of a collision between such vessels would be. Suddenly a bright idea struck me. It was a forlorn hope, but I determined to try it. Springing upon the rail, I hailed the commander of the *Destroyer*, who was on the bridge of his vessel, telling him that I had a plan which would possibly prevent the collision.

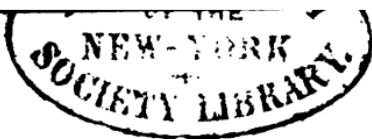
“ ‘ Let’s have it, quick !

“ ‘ It is simply to load our port and your starboard guns with blank cartridge, and when we are near enough to fire, with the hope that the reaction will drive us apart.’

“Waving his hand as a signal of assent, he sprang from the bridge, and we both went to work to execute the plan. The crews were called to quarters, and our port and the *Destroyer's* starboard guns were double loaded with blank cartridge, after which the crews were sent below to escape as much as possible the terrible concussion. Each gun could be fired from the conning-tower, or either battery altogether, by means of electricity, and I knew that the same appliance was in use on the English vessel. I called to the commander to fire when I struck the ship's bell, which he could plainly hear from his position. Our arrangements were hurriedly made, for time pressed, though perfect discipline prevailed, and I stood in the conning-tower, my finger on the electric button, waiting the proper moment to fire.

"Noiselessly the two leviathans approached each other ; inch by inch, foot by foot, the space between us narrowed. Not a sound was to be heard ; a death-like stillness prevailed ; the decks of both vessels were entirely deserted, every man and officer, except those in the conning-towers, having gone below to escape the explosion. The suspense was terrible, for if this experiment failed, the crashing, crushing collision must follow, and this meant death to part, if not all, of us. I knew that the commander of the *Destroyer* was at his post in the conning-tower, his finger on the button, his eye and ear alert for the signal.

"Just as the two monsters, rising on the swell, seemed about to crash into each other, and when the muzzles of the guns were almost mouth to mouth, I raised my arm and the bell struck, and at



the same moment I pressed the button. A mighty gush of lurid, blinding flame, a roar that sounded like the crack of doom, and the next thing I knew I was untangling myself from among a heap of struggling arms and legs on the deck. At last I managed to stand upright, and while the rest of the occupants of the tower were getting to their feet, I tried to collect my scattered senses. I was stunned and dazed, and my nose was bleeding, but at last I managed to pull myself to the opening in the conning-tower, and to my great joy saw the *Destroyer* at least fifty yards away, and still receding with a rolling, plunging motion. The air was filled with a vapor like thin fog, for though we used smokeless powder, the immense amount of it discharged at short range left a slight smoke. I noticed also that our relative

positions had changed, for we had forged a little ahead.

"I was fearful of the effect of this terrible concussion on the crew, but in a moment the men began to pour on deck from every hatchway, and I realized that they were uninjured. No serious casualties occurred, and all felt extremely thankful for our providential escape. The dinner call, which had been long delayed, was sounded, and we gathered at the table to discuss the strange situation.

"The day waned and darkness drew on. The moon rose out of the sea, and there we lay, silently swinging on the ebon waves, no sound to break the stillness save the tinkle of the bells, the pipe of the boatswain's whistle, or the occasional order of some petty officer. Near at hand lay the Britisher, smoke

still issuing from her stacks, but no sign of life visible.

" Luckily the weather remained perfect, and for the present we had nothing to fear, though the proximity of the other vessel was a continual menace, and gave me much uneasiness, especially when darkness fell. I paced the bridge till midnight, wondering how this was all to end, and seeking in vain for a solution to the perplexing problem. At last I turned in, after giving orders for a double lookout, and directions that I be called immediately if anything unusual occurred.

" When morning dawned the sun arose upon the same condition of things. No change had taken place in our relative positions, and we were apparently drifting side by side in some current. An observation revealed the fact that we

were drifting and where should we bring up?

"We had given over trying to make steam, simply keeping our fires going, in order that we might increase them if it seemed of any use. You will hardly believe it, but for two whole weeks we drifted in this manner, the distances varying, but we were never more than a mile or two apart. The weather remained balmy and clear, and frequent visits of a social nature were exchanged between the officers of the two vessels. At these meetings and dinners the subject of our strange adventure was naturally the foremost topic of conversation, but all our reasoning and discussion brought us no nearer the mark. We were as much in the dark as ever. It seemed to be simply a question of where we should drift to, and from our position and the trend of our

course, it seemed likely we should bring up in the South Atlantic ocean. We were liberally supplied with food and water, and were good for a number of weeks, and in the meantime we looked for something to turn up, some change in our condition which would help us out of the scrape. We were now out of the path of vessels, and no sails were sighted, although we kept a constant lookout for them. The ocean was bare and glistening, day after day, to the horizon's edge.

"But at last, just as our patience was getting low, a change came. On the seventeenth day of September, the twentieth day of our ocean imprisonment, about three in the morning, I was called by the officer of the deck.

"A change had taken place in the weather. I hurried on deck, and sure enough our period of calm and safety was

at an end. The sky overhead was inky black, and not a star was to be seen. The wind, sweeping over the deck, made a moaning sound as it whistled around the turrets and superstructure; a difference was perceptible, too, in the motion of the ship. She no longer rode on an even keel, but plunged slightly, and with an uneasy, jerky motion. In the distance the outline of the other man-of-war could be faintly seen. This change made me at once anxious. A storm was evidently brewing, and here we were, helpless as an old dismantled hulk. No steam, no sails, no anything. What was the use of our splendid boilers, our costly machinery, our triple screws? They might as well have been at the bottom of the sea.

“A glance at the barometer showed a steady fall. A storm, and that a bad one, was at hand. I paced the deck,

waiting impatiently for the dawn, but when it came it afforded no relief. The sea ran sullen and gray, while dark, ugly-looking clouds packed the heavens and frowned upon our helplessness. The force of the wind was steadily increasing, and it was now blowing half a gale. The motion of the vessel was momentarily becoming more and more noticeable as she lay in the trough of the sea. My anxiety increased with the wind, and went up as the barometer went down. The officers consulted in groups uneasily, unable to conceal their anxiety from the crew, who were watching the storm with many dark forebodings.

"As the day wore on the condition of things grew steadily worse, and when darkness fell it was upon a waste of windy, thrashing waters, upon which our great unmanageable hull was tossing and

rolling like a child's toy. The *Destroyer*, at a distance of a couple of miles, was in as bad a plight as ourselves. We could see her, as long as it was light, rise to the top of a great billow and then go sinking out of sight in the abyss beyond, only to repeat the step over and over again.

"Our oil lights were hoisted as the darkness came on, but oh, how we missed our steam! for we could not use our search lights, which would have enabled us to keep the *Destroyer* in full view. No steam, no electricity, of course, except from small batteries, enough to keep the electric bells in action. The danger of collision in the darkness, and with this frightful sea running, was imminent, and we were powerless to prevent it. The two great unwieldy masses of iron and steel, with their freight of hundreds of

human lives, their intricate and costly machinery, their great guns and engines of destruction, were tossing upon the enormous surges, rolling from the depths of one abyss to the horrors of another, like sodden logs in a cataract ; and if by chance they should collide, there was nothing but destruction for both. The situation was horrible. If we could have done anything, had any employment to occupy our minds and hands, we could have borne the suspense better, but we could only wait, what seemed to be the inevitable result, with what bravery and resignation we could command.

“The hatches were battened down, and all means of ingress to the hull sealed, in order to prevent the monstrous waves from swamping us. All the men and officers were on deck, lashed to the rail, or secured in some way. The

wind, which was now blowing the most terrible gale it was ever my misfortune to witness, howled and roared as it swept great volumes of water from the tops of the waves to be driven in hail across the deck. To breathe was difficult; to speak or see, impossible. Mountains of water were constantly pouring over the deck, sweeping everything before them. Nothing movable was left; our boats had been either carried away, or smashed at the davits early in the storm.

"Every time we rushed down one of those great declivities into the seething cauldron lashing below to receive us, I closed my eyes, never expecting to see the light again, but after what seemed minutes of terrible struggle and labor, the noble vessel rose once more above the waves, and again began the dizzy

climb, only to repeat the sickening plunge.

“This had been going on for hours, each moment the storm increasing in violence, and I had given up all hopes of saving the vessel or our lives. I was momentarily in expectation of seeing the iron ram of our consort plunging at us. Suddenly, in the midst of the howling, black storm, I noticed a streak of vivid forked lightning, and this first flash was followed by another and another, all seeming to start and radiate from a point directly overhead in the heavens, and to spread out like the spokes of a wheel from the hub, while the crash of thunder which accompanied it was like the explosion of thousands of pounds of dynamite.

“As soon as I could bear the lurid light, I looked around for the *Destroyer*, and to my horror saw her apparently

right above us, on the crest of a huge mountain-like wave, and just toppling over to come crashing down upon us, for we were in the vortex below. This sight, which froze my blood, was seen by all at the same moment, and above the shriek of the storm I heard the hoarse, agonized cries of the men. I watched her with sickened heart, as she came plunging like a meteor at us, her great steel ram aiming as true as though directed by human hands, while the faces of her men and officers could be distinctly seen on the deck. Just as I thought the blow was to strike, I closed my eyes, murmuring a prayer, but, though I waited several moments, the blow did not fall. Opening my eyes fearfully, to my joy I found that a wave, as big as the one down which our fearful antagonist was darting, had borne us out of harm's way,

at least, for the moment. A faint cheer rang out over the waste of waters, and we breathed again.

"The lightning still continued, and the picture it revealed was horrible to contemplate. Not a soul who witnessed that frightful spectacle of the elements, lashed to blind, ungovernable fury, ever expected to see the light of day again. We could catch glimpses of the *Destroyer*, plunging and rolling, off on our starboard quarter. The air was filled with electricity; blue electric flames ran along the metallic rails, jumped from gun to gun, and glimmered in ghastly radiance on binnacle and crosshead, while round globes, like lanterns, surmounted the signal masts; electric shocks kept running through my body, and my hair stood fairly on end with horror and electricity combined; my fingers tingled; my eye-

balls seemed bulging from my head, and my teeth chattered. Another minute of it would have turned every soul on board into a corpse, but it ceased as suddenly as it began, and as the last flash occurred a strange change took place. The deep, dark gloom which followed the intense brilliancy of the electric storm began to lift, and a pale yellow light, like dawn, broke over the awful tumult. I looked at my watch and found it was only 1 o'clock, so that it could not be sunrise.

"This light gradually became stronger, turning from pale yellow to deep orange, and illuminated the sea till it was as bright as noonday, but it was not as the light of the sun. Everything wore a strange tint of deepest orange, an uncanny tinge, while the heavens were shot with bands of deep purple running transversely. Many of the men were on their knees

praying, and I must confess the events of the past few days were enough to justify a man in believing that the end of the world was at hand. As this light strengthened the hurricane abated, and the sea went down. The great mountains of water were smoothed as by magic, and in less than ten minutes there was not enough air stirring to blow out a candle, and the ship was riding as gently as though in harbor. This sudden change, from the most awful tumult and raging storm imaginable to absolute quiet and peace, was indescribable ; words cannot paint it. This was perhaps the most miraculous circumstance of this eventful voyage. That a gale of such ferocity should have entirely disappeared in ten minutes was remarkable enough, but that a sea which would ordinarily have lasted for days should have become as a

82 THE STEAM INTERLUDE.

mill-pond in the same length of time, indicated something supernatural, or, at least, a departure from the established and known laws of nature.

" But a few brief moments since, our vessel was climbing mountains with lightning rapidity, and falling off their summits into yawning cauldrons of death, while a hurricane strong enough to blow a man's teeth down his throat howled around us, and darkness that could be felt enveloped us. Now we rode gently and softly on a calm, placid, summer sea, while the air around us bore the deep orange tint of an autumnal sunset. A short mile away lay our companion of so many vicissitudes, and but for her broken davits and battered appearance you would have thought she had just come to anchor. I gazed upon this scene in stupid amazement, for you must remem-

ber that by the clock it was still in the middle of the night. I had not dared to clear away the lashings which held me, for fear that this was only a temporary lull, to be followed by something more terrific; but as minute after minute passed, and nothing occurred to disturb the serenity of the scene, I finally cut myself adrift, and the other officers, doing like-wise, gathered around me awe-struck and weak from fear. The crew cowered under the bulwarks with ashen faces, and were even more frightened than they had been during the storm. We were all eagerly discussing the strange phenomena, and wondering what would happen next, when the bell from the engine-room rang. It startled me as, in our unstrung condition, the least thing was magnified. I stepped to the tube and answered the call.

“‘What is it?’

“‘She is making steam.’

“‘Hurrah!’ I cried, forgetting myself for the moment. ‘She is making steam.’ And without more ado we all hurried to the engine room, where we found the engineers eagerly watching the dial of the steam gauge. Sure enough, the indicator, which for so many days had hung disconsolate at zero, was slowly but steadily crawling round the dial. The engineers were jubilant, and I never felt such a sense of relief in my life. With my engines working, I did not fear anything natural, though I must confess that I had cultivated a very healthy fear of the supernatural. I knew that a few minutes would give us control of the ship again.

“‘When did you first notice the change?’ I asked the chief engineer.

“‘At just three bells. I had just looked at the clock, and then glanced at the gauge, more from habit than anything else, and my heart fairly stood still when I saw the indicator vibrating.’

“‘Have her fired to her full capacity and put on forced draft, Mr. Sproul, and start the engines the moment there is steam enough. There’s no knowing what may be coming next.’

“‘Aye, aye, sir.’

“‘The *Destroyer* signals that her boilers are making steam, sir,’ reported a cadet at this moment.

“‘Signal back that ours, too, have started up.’

“Would wonders never cease! The Britisher’s engines stopped simultaneously with ours, and now the minute our boilers began to make steam hers also resumed their work. These facts, taken together

with the miraculous and supernatural scenes we had just been witnessses to, left no doubt in our mind that the cause of the trouble was totally unconnected with our boilers or engines, and due to some occult circumstance, entirely beyond our knowledge. But whatever the cause, it had evidently ceased to influence us, and the boilers had resumed their normal action. In less than half an hour the tremor of the vessel announced that the screws were in motion, and we once more had control of the noble vessel. You can imagine the feeling of relief I experienced when the man at the wheel threw her over and brought her head to the course. It was like coming to life after having passed beyond the gates.

“The British steamer soon forged up within hailing distance, and we concluded, as we were both bound round the

Horn, to keep within signalling distance in case of emergency. We congratulated ourselves and each other on our escape from what seemed certain death, and then, giving the signal, we both moved ahead on our course.

"During all this time the strange orange light had continued, though the purple bands across the sky had gradually paled away and disappeared. The illumination was now giving way to the light of day, and it was with a feeling of relief that we saw the sun rise from its ocean bed and displace the awesome and spectral refulgence. It seemed as though things had at last got back to their normal condition and natural laws were re-established.

"The rest of our voyage was uneventful, but when we touched at Valparaiso, full of our experiences, and expecting to

electrify the civilized world, we were not only disconcerted, but dumfounded, to learn that we had been playing but an infinitesimal part in a great drama which had had the world for its stage, all the inhabitants thereof for actors, and perhaps, the peoples of other planets for spectators.

" You have read in your history at school, my boy, how, on the 29th day of August, 1905, in every part of the world, water ceased to make steam, and how this strange event was preceded by certain peculiar conditions of the atmosphere and heavens, and in some sections by violent and terrible earthquakes, which destroyed even many of the mammoth buildings in New York city; and how this state of things lasted for twenty days, when, after great electrical storms, such as I have described, and which were

common over the whole world, the ban seemed to be removed, and steam, the great motive power, once more revived.

“ You have read what disasters, what sufferings, and what trouble it caused. How vessels were lost at sea with thousands of lives ; how trains were stranded in every corner of the world, leaving the passengers to get to their destinations as best they could ; how all the great factories were stopped and millions of people thrown out of employment ; how our cities, which depended on electricity generated by steam, were left in total darkness ; how families were separated, business prostrated, marriages prevented, the dead buried without the presence of loved ones ; how bread rose to a dollar a pound, and all other necessaries of life in proportion ; how the streets were filled with people begging for food ; how mobs

of rioters attacked the great cities; how horses became worth fabulous prices; and how, in fact, for the space of twenty days the world was in chaos,—and all because when you put a kettle on the stove steam refused to come out of the spout."

JOINING THE CAVALRY.

It was Sunday morning in midsummer. Breakfast was over, the work done, and Abel, the hired man, was shaving in his room in the L. Elizabeth had put away the dishes, and was sitting on the front stoop. She was not going to church. Somehow, she did not feel in the mood for it, though her mother had remonstrated with her. Her mother was not going, because she was too old, and almost bent double with rheumatism. Elizabeth could see her sitting in the open window, reading her big Bible, a sight which was as familiar as the old house itself.

Elizabeth was out of spirits, rebellious, this morning; just why, she could not tell. The idea of church was repugnant to her. She felt to go and thank God for her manifold mercies would be ridiculous. What were they? It was strange, too, to have this feeling on this glorious summer morning. But perhaps that was just what induced it.

From the great square house, with its barns and stables and outhouses to the rear, the lawn sloped away to the winding country road. Great elms and horse-chestnut trees spread their broad limbs, and a row of cherry trees marked the boundary to the right. The robins were crying as they circled around and made forays on the ripe red fruit. Bees boomed busily about through the honeysuckle, and the locusts made the shade more grateful by their whirring song, so

suggestive of noontide heat. The sun, piercing here and there through the trees, made flickering shapes of light and shade on the smoothly cut grass, while over the great hill to the left came softly stealing the peal of the church bells. It was a morning to turn one's thoughts towards all that was enjoyable and beautiful, to draw out the romantic side of one's nature, to make one long for the sweets of life, a day to expand the heart, to stir up that undefined yearning which we all have now and then for something wider, something different, a yearning to emerge from the valley and gaze from the hills on a broader life,—the effort of the fish jumping from the water to look over the horizon.

This was what Elizabeth felt, and, added to it, was a certain bitterness, a deep-down sadness, for she felt it was all so

far from her, so impossible. She was not in the first flush of youth; she had passed what is generally considered the romantic age. She was forty. For forty years she had lived right there, busy from morn till night upon the farm, except for the few terms when she taught the village school. Her father had died while she was yet a young girl, and her brothers had married or gone away to distant parts of the country, leaving her to manage the farm and care for her aged mother. Not that they had been poor, though they certainly were not rich; but her life had been full of care, full of responsibility. She had done a man's work, had thought a man's thoughts, had been a business woman with all that the name implies, and in addition had been a sturdy staff to the mother she loved so well.

There had been few breaks, fewer

vacations. The farm was a large and valuable one, and it took head work and activity to carry it on successfully and compete with her neighbors, and with the ever-growing competition from the West. Nevertheless, the farm had paid. These cares had given Elizabeth a certain force and decision of character, which were shown in the firm lines of the mouth, and in the broad forehead. There was a dignity about her, an air of knowing what she wanted to do and being able to do it. She was admired by all the farmers about, of all ages, and any Sunday afternoon you could have seen her leaning over the fence, advising and consulting with the keenest of her competitors as to seeding, the markets, or the cattle.

Her life had been one of affairs, and yet, strange to say, she was romantic, though few, if any, suspected it. There

was an undercurrent of which even she was scarce aware, for she had little time to indulge it. Only on occasions like the present did it manifest itself.

She was always conscious of a feeling of unrest, a certain longing for she knew not what, and she took it out in reading novels, novels of romance, of passion, as far removed as possible from the work-a-day world she knew. There had always been a dream, vague, unreal, singing through her mind, of a home of her own, of a man who would do for her what she had so long done for others; but the years sped by, and the dream grew more and more misty and vague, as a silver thread appeared here and there, and the lines about the mouth deepened. But the last page of a novel usually found her in tears, the cause of which she did not care to seek.

There was an element of comedy in the life she and her mother led, though neither was aware of it. Mrs. Roberts was one of the typical old New England mothers, the kind that spun and wove a century ago, when the woman of the house had to be as proficient with the rifle as with the rolling-pin. Small of stature, gentle, but keen of eye, her snow-white, silky hair smoothed back over her ears, a mouth expressive of resolution and determination, and a figure bent and bowed by rheumatism, for good health and she had long been at odds. This is her picture, as it presents itself to my mind. Work was her enjoyment, and from daylight till dark her nimble fingers never slackened. She had no patience with idleness, no use for the time-wasting gimcracks of modern times. Her Bible was her only book, and she

lived up to the letter of it. It seemed as though she were the living embodiment of the "Sermon on the Mount." Charity, forgiveness, perseverance in good works, helpfulness, long suffering, patience, hopefulness, all were hers. In her presence the voice of anger was hushed, the tongue of slander silenced. Her charity was as broad as the heavens, and her belief in the Bible something grand and inspiring to witness. And to think of that long, good, kindly life stretching back through a period almost equal to our national existence!

But the comedy, you say. Well, it was just here. Elizabeth had never been away from her. All her other ewe lambs had grown into bearded men and had scattered to the four winds of heaven, but Elizabeth had remained by the hearth-stone. The old lady had not

noticed that Elizabeth had grown into a woman, a mature woman even. To her she was still a girl. As a girl she had been mischievous, romping, hoydenish, full of life, always getting into scrapes, and a constant source of worry to her mother. Elizabeth took the corrections meekly, for as she had never been away from her mother for any length of time, she herself did not realize that she had outgrown the need of them. To her friends it was always the cause of a great deal of quiet amusement, though it would never do to exhibit any outward signs in the presence of either of them.

Her mother did not see, as others did, that Elizabeth had become a woman and outgrown her childish ways and pranks. To her she was still the romping school-girl, and to hear her say in a reproving voice, "Elizabeth!" was simply delicious.

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It conveyed such a reproof, and was answered so meekly, though with others Elizabeth had spirit enough. Novel reading was her delight, but to the good old Puritan mother novels were a snare and a sinful waste of time, so she had to do most of her novel reading in her room. I have often seen her bring home the latest novel disguised as a piece of steak.

I remember once being at the house when some children came in. The old lady looked suspiciously around to see if Elizabeth were in sight, and then slipped over to the bureau drawer and drew out from under a pile of clothes a box of peppermints. These she gave to the children. While they were in the act of eating them, in walked Elizabeth.

“Why, mother! where did you get those peppermints?” she exclaimed.

The old lady was caught, but she said sharply, "Oh, I've had them a long time, but I hid them so you wouldn't get at them."

And so their life went on. The days were brimming over with work, both in the house and in the fields, for, though they had a good man in Abel, Elizabeth superintended everything. She directed the planting, engaged the men for the harvesting, mapped out where the different crops should be planted, sowed, drained, cut timber, and sold her products; at least, I mean that she directed it all. In the evening she cast up her accounts, or consulted with Abel as to the next day's work. You can readily see that there was very little time in her life for introspection, and it was only on rare occasions that she had an opportunity for self-examination like this

morning. Once in a great while there were days when the work ceased and the pen was idle, and then the old, girlish ideals and fancies would crop out.

She inherited all the fire, life, and activity of her ancestors, who were among the pioneers, and took a prominent part in the Revolution. Her mind was active. It reached out and took in all the possibilities of life. How many, many times she had vainly wished herself a man, that she might enter the lists and achieve something worthy of her name. She was a close reader. She followed the politics of the day with avidity, and ever since the war she had been deeply interested in the army. So many of her childhood's friends had marched away to the front never to return; there were so many vacancies around the hearth-stones of those she knew. Then, too, there

had been one young man in particular, who had disappeared over the hill with his blue coat and his musket, and who never came back. Had she been a man, she would have gone with him. For this, and other reasons, the army possessed for her a strange fascination.

This morning, while the distant church bells were softly calling to prayer, her mind was vaguely skimming the universe. She was engaged in all sorts of travels and exploits. She saw herself on a great ocean steamer, ploughing its swift path towards the East; she arrived; she viewed with wonder and delight the historically familiar spots of London; she sped to Scotland and to Ireland on the wings of her fancy; crossed the Channel to dazzling, brilliant Paris, and so on and on ceaselessly, stealing glimpses of crowned heads, viewing mighty military

pageants, bewildering scenery, and, in short, all the wonders and beauties of an old and cultivated world. She was just entering the capital of Russia, when—

“ ‘Lisbeth! ‘Lisbeth! Those hens are in the garden again,” came from the open window, and instead of gazing upon the magnificence of the czar’s capital, she shooed the hens out of the turnip patch. This was the usual end of her dreams, and Elizabeth laughed sadly to herself as she hasped the door of the hen-house and returned to her seat.

A short time after the Sunday on which we found her dreaming, she received, much to her delight, an invitation to visit the capital of the state for a few days. One of her brothers lived there, and once in a great while, when she could arrange to leave her mother,

she paid him a visit. Her going all depended on whether she could get an elderly relative of theirs to stay at the farm during her absence. In this she was successful, and she left home overjoyed at the brief outing, and with many warnings and cautions from her mother, which she promised to heed.

It happened that the National Guard of the state was holding its annual encampment at the capital that week, and the streets were alive with people. Occasionally an officer would clatter by on horseback, attended by his orderly, or a group of privates, who had in some way evaded the guard, strolled by the house. They gave a touch of color to the landscape, and added a drop of spice to life. Elizabeth felt that it was all quite metropolitan, for uniforms were her especial delight. At the farm nothing ever went

by but a load of hay or a cord of wood on its way to market.

During the encampment it was the custom for all of the good people of the city to go over to the camp, which lay a mile or two outside, and across the river, to witness dress parade at 5 o'clock.

The day of her arrival they all set out in the comfortable family carriage to witness the ceremony. The camp was pitched on a broad, level plain, surrounded on all sides by forests of hemlock, and, still farther in the background, the encircling hills in all their summer greenness. The long rows of snow-white tents, the fluttering flags and pennons, the guards walking their posts, the glitter of accoutrements, and the deep, dark background of the forest, made a picture one would go far to surpass.

As they went through the gate, past

the arsenal and the guard which was just turning out to honor some general officer, the bugles were sounding the adjutant's call, and the troops could be seen forming in the company streets. They took up their position in the long line of carriages fronting the broad parade ground. Several aides galloped across the parade, to mark the line for the formation. The regiments were now all formed on the regimental parade grounds, and, at the second call, with bands playing and colors flying, they marched to their positions in line. This was all before brigade dress parades were done away with by the lately revised tactics.

In the meantime the brigade commander with his staff came prancing out from brigade headquarters, with all the glitter of gold lace and flash of gilt, and took up his position just in front of the

carriage containing Elizabeth, facing the line of troops. Regiment after regiment moved gaily and steadily out into its position, and following the infantry, the red plumes of the artillery could be seen on the left, and finally the yellow of the cavalry. The long, yellow barrels of the guns gleamed in the sun as they clattered and clanked into line, while the rattle of the sabres of the cavalry could be plainly heard across the parade. Sabres glittered and horses pranced, but at last all are in their designated places, and the adjutant, way down on the right of the line, after giving an order or two, stands rigid, while the great consolidated band of over a hundred pieces opens its mouths of brass, and comes swinging down the front, playing a march to make all pulses beat in time.

To Elizabeth it was a revelation. She

stood up in the carriage, while her heart beat faster and faster, and her cheeks glowed. The declining sun cast its rays upon the gleaming brasses, the white gloves and the glistening barrels, while the mellow-throated instruments went on and on down the line, pouring forth their delicious music; finally, turning on themselves, they came grandly back, while every soldier stood as though turned to stone and not an eyelid stirred. Louder and fuller the martial air swells upon the ear as the band approaches, the drum major's baton whirling proudly at the front. At last it reaches its station, the music ceases, and the thrilling notes of the bugle follow, with their ringing ta-ra-ta-ra. Bang! goes the sunset gun, and "Old Glory" comes shimmering down from its proud position; the adjutant gallops to the front, and the ceremony goes on.

This is fairy-land. The music, the uniforms, the prancing horses, the gay equipages, all fill her with delight. Her eyes shine, her foot keeps time with the music. She had been so intent upon the scene as a whole that she had noted very few of the details, and things near at hand had entirely escaped her. Not a word had she uttered since she entered the grounds, and her friends, seeing her absorption, had simply smiled and allowed her to enjoy it uninterruptedly. Now, however, she had an opportunity to look about her and take in the details—the carriages with the gaily-dressed women, resplendent in summer costume, the handsome turnouts, and the people near at hand. Right in front of them was the general with his staff. She curiously examined each officer and his horse, and as she did so a longing came again

into her heart to be a man, to take part in the activities of the world, to travel, to seek adventures, to make a name.

She was conscious, in an undefined way, that she was made of the stuff that successful men are made of, but she realized with a sigh that such things were not for her; the limitations which had been placed upon her life were insurmountable. A soldier's life had always had a great fascination for her, and she had even dreamed of being a soldier's wife, as the next best thing to being a soldier herself.

While she was following this train of thought, almost unconsciously, the general was giving his commands, and the long lines which had been standing so steadily at "attention" began to wheel and break to the right. She was watching the evolution, when, suddenly, she

felt that some one was watching *her*, and looked around wonderingly. Her eyes encountered those of a tall officer in uniform, standing but a few yards distant. He quickly turned away, when he saw that he was observed, and directed his gaze upon the now advancing column. Elizabeth blushed. It was so unusual to find herself an object of interest, and as the officer's back was now turned, she could examine him at her leisure. He was tall, and erect as an Indian, having that peculiar carriage which always marks a West Point graduate. His hair was jet black, and she could see the ends of a long military moustache. His shoulders were broad, his chest full, fining away towards his hips. His uniform, bearing the distinctive yellow stripes of the cavalry, fitted him like a glove. Elizabeth longed for another look at his face, but

he kept obstinately turned the other way. He did not seem to be taking a part in any way in the ceremony, but from time to time he made minutes on a little tablet, which he held in his hand.

The troops were approaching to pass in review. When the band reached the reviewing officer, it swung out to the left, and took up its position opposite. One by one the regiments came marching by, company front, the officers saluting, every eye turned towards the reviewing officer, while the general raised his hat to the colors. After the infantry had marched by with solid tread, the cavalry followed, with flash of sabre and rattle of scabbard, and glitter of yellow housings. Last of all came the artillery, and the gun carriages and caissons rumbled by, with each trooper sitting

erect, and each grim-looking gun shining as though made of polished gold.

Now it was all over. The band was marching to its quarters, the regiments were being dismissed upon their regimental parade grounds, while the general and his staff had galloped to another part of the field, and Elizabeth, with a sigh of regret, turned to look for the officer whom she had observed a few moments before; but he had disappeared. She wondered who he was, and why he had looked at her, and, further, why his look had had power to attract her attention.

The family had been invited to stay to tea at the brigade mess, and extricating their carriage from the tangle of vehicles, they drove to headquarters, and were taken in hand by one of the officers. The headquarters were situated in a grove

of hard pine, and a more beautiful spot could not have been selected. The tents occupied three sides of a square, and the fourth side was filled by a marqué for the accommodation of the bands when they gave concerts in the evening. The sun was just sinking behind the western hills, the odor of pine and balsam filled the air, and the clash of martial music, rattle of accoutrements, and sound of command was followed by stillness, only broken by the gay shouts of a party of soldiers, who, untired by the work of the day, were playing foot-ball on the parade ground. Nearly all the officers had disappeared within their quarters to throw off their full dress uniform, and they soon began to straggle out, dressed in their more comfortable fatigue coats and caps.

About this time a dapper little chap, with the chevrons of a sergeant, stepped

smartly out to the edge of the parade ground, and blew a few notes on a bugle, which were repeated up and down the regimental line. There was a general scurrying, and Elizabeth surmised the call meant supper. She was right, and they were soon seated at the table under a big tent, while neat waiters flitted about. The general occupied the head of the table, and the staff officers scattered among the ladies and visitors. It was with some surprise that Elizabeth noticed the tall, dignified officer she had observed at dress parade placed in the seat of honor at the general's right. Twice their eyes met, and she found herself coloring consciously. It was such a new sensation to be observed, and by a *man*. She need not have been surprised, for there was a great deal to attract a thinking and observing man in her face

and personality. There was strength and beauty in the firm, though irregular, lines of her face, quite unusual in a woman, and her gray eyes were bright, piercing, and truthful. Her life in the open air had given her a magnificent figure, tall, well-developed, and graceful.

During a lull in the conversation Elizabeth took advantage of her position next to an officer to inquire who the one on the general's right was.

"That? Oh, that's Captain Hubbard of the Seventh cavalry. You know he's detailed by the government to inspect this camp, and he has to report on it to the war department."

"That accounts for his keeping tab at dress-parade, then?"

"Yes. He has to watch everything. He's a fine fellow, though, and very popular. I don't know as you remember,

but he has made a great reputation for himself in the army, and has been referred to a great many times in dispatches during the late Indian war. You would n't think it, he's such a quiet fellow, and so reserved. He's one of the bravest men in the army, and has been in nearly all the battles of the Seventh, and you know that's a fighting regiment. He has been wounded twice, and it's great fun if you can get him to talking about his campaigns ; but it is very hard to get him started. He won't talk if there are many around, and seldom refers to himself."

" I should think he would be that kind of a man," said Elizabeth, and again her eyes met the captain's, and both looked away guiltily.

When supper was finished, darkness had fallen, and lights were twinkling

among the tents. The soft, summer evening had come, the stars were glimmering through the trees, and the officers lighted their cigars or pipes, and stretched upon the pine needles, or strolled about with their fair visitors. This is the witching hour of the day in camp, and the reward for all the labors of the day to officers and privates alike. Work is over, except for the sentries, and rest, tobacco, music, and moonshine take its place.

Elizabeth and her party lazily watched a detail of men who were bringing cord wood and building the evening camp-fire. Great sticks of four-foot wood were placed on end, and the centre was filled with small wood and combustibles. It was placed right in the middle of the quadrangle between the tents, and when a match was touched to it, it flared up into a great,

roaring mass of flame, jumping up among the trees and swirling and licking the air spitefully, throwing into strong relief the spotless white tents. The scattered groups drew around the fire, and soon one of the bands took up its position in the marquée.

“That was all we needed to make it perfect!” exclaimed one of the party; and when the soft strains of the latest waltz floated out on the evening air, all agreed with her. The music attracted visitors as a fire does moths, and the quadrangle was soon filled with people, standing under the trees, or walking up and down outside the line of firelight. Elizabeth lay back in a steamer chair, gazing into the fire dreamily, and building castles. How beautiful life *might* be! How beautiful it *was to some!* she thought, and how prosy hers!

For two hours the band played, and for two hours she was in dreamland. March and waltz followed each other in quick succession, only broken by the hum of voices, or the sudden bursts of laughter from a group of officers who were telling stories to the governor. The firelight flickered on the dark blue overcoats of the officers, which the cool night air had rendered necessary, and upon the lighter dresses of their companions. Occasionally a sentry would come within the line of light, as he silently and slowly paced his post, and would then disappear in the darkness. Once an orderly came up, inquiring for the General; and the "officer of the day" sat down for a moment to enjoy the fire. Way off, across the parade, could be seen the glow and sparks and shooting tongues of flame of many camp-fires, and an

occasional burst of song, or a cheer, indicated that the men were also enjoying themselves.

The effect of the whole scene was one never to be forgotten. The soft, summer night, with the distant, glimmering stars, the leaping fires, the delicious music, the shadowy uniformed figures, the white tents, the dark, surrounding forest, the aroma of the balsam, and, encircling and embracing all, the dim, distant hills, just faintly outlined in the dusk.

Finally the band played "In Old Madrid," which Elizabeth heard for the first time, and she sat spellbound, as the dreamy, languorous notes, so suggestive of love, youth, life, and all that is sweet, floated among the trees. A hush fell upon all. One scarcely dared or cared to breathe, for fear of missing a note, and

when the last bar died away a sigh came from many lips, while Elizabeth quietly wiped away a tear. This proved to be the last piece of the evening, and the ranks of the listeners began to thin. Elizabeth's party had decided to stay till after "taps," however, and they drew closer about the now dying fire. The General was discussing with some line officers the next day's work at one side, but the rest of the party seemed content to stare at the coals and dream. Now and then, some one would attempt to start conversation, but met with little assistance. Elizabeth glanced around the fire to see who were left. Most of those remaining were officers, with their caps pulled down over their eyes to shade them from the fire, puffing silently at their pipes; here and there a wife or sweetheart still lingered. As her eye roved

about, she happened to glance outside the circle of firelight, and noticed, a few paces away, a tall officer wearing a military cape, leaning against a tree, evidently watching the party about the fire. She knew instinctively who this was, and then reddened to realize that she knew. Some one else discovered him at the same time, and he was drawn into the circle and given a chair.

He was hardly seated before a sweet young girl began to press him to tell them a story about his army life on the frontier. He seemed very reluctant to do so, and appeared to object to being made the center and object of observation of the whole circle, and it was only after much urging, in which all but Elizabeth joined, that he consented to talk.

Elizabeth hung on his words spell-bound. He told his story simply, with-

out any embellishment or exaggeration, and studiously avoided any reference to himself, while he was warm in his praises of his fellow-officers.

"It's mighty seldom you can get him to talk this way," said an officer by her side.

The captain had finished his story, the flames were flickering out, and the first notes of "retreat" were being sounded, and were taken up far over on the left of the line at the cavalry quarters, then by the artillery bugler, and on and on through the infantry, till it died away among the hills. The soft, plaintive notes, echoing in the distance, seeming to bid a tender good-night, and to be a fitting and loving end to the happiest day Elizabeth had ever known.

With the last notes lights went out all along the line of tents, and the noise of

song and laughter was hushed as if by magic. The camp was left to the care of watchful sentries, who paced silently back and forth, challenging now and then some belated officer returning to his quarters.

The memory of this day lingered in her mind as a happy, though mocking, dream. It gave her a glimpse of joys long desired, but never tasted; while at the same time it brought home to her the dullness and hopelessness of her life. Her visit ended, she returned to the farm, and took up her cares again uncomplainingly, thankful that she had had this taste, even, of happiness. She often found herself repeating, "Captain Hubbard, of the Seventh cavalry." And then the notes of the bugle sounding "retreat" would come singing sadly through her mind.

In October all the papers were full of a great railroad strike, and it was interesting to Elizabeth and her mother, as it was so near at hand. The road itself ran through the farm, indeed divided it in two. It was no ordinary strike, but had been long planned, and when it finally broke, it was accompanied by violence and destruction of property on the part of strikers. The farm was located but a mile from town, and quite near were valuable railroad shops and other property which it was feared might be destroyed. The police of the adjoining town were not strong enough to protect it, and the railroad company called upon the governor for assistance. The latter was prompt to act, and within twenty-four hours a regiment of the National Guard of the state was on duty. Their camp was established by a small stream

within view of the farm-house, and the line of pickets extended to and beyond the farm. It was all very exciting, and it was with real pleasure that Elizabeth saw again the familiar blue coats and heard the trumpet calls. She had never expected to have it all so near again.

Every moment she could spare she spent out in the great barn, which stood upon the summit of a hill, and from the broad door in the rear you could look right down upon the camp.

She could see the white tents by the stream, the pickets pacing up and down, hear the sharp beat of the drums at roll-call, and watch the files marching and counter-marching, posting and relieving guard. When night came, she could see from her window the camp-fires, and even hear the sentry's challenge.

It was all fascinating and exciting, and

she could not help wishing that the strike might last for some time. With a field glass she could almost distinguish faces, and she laughed at her own foolishness when she found herself trying to make out whether any of the officers wore yellow stripes on their trousers. Of course *he* would not be there. He was only ordered to the state for the encampment, and had long since joined his command, and was now probably far in the West, at some frontier post. Then Elizabeth would sigh and turn back to her work; but, truth to say, *her* farming was much interfered with in those days. Her mother noticed the neglect and reproved her for it.

"Come, Elizabeth! The way you are wasting your time over those soldier chaps is ridiculous. Can't you find anything to do?"

Elizabeth blushed, smiled sadly, and went about her work without making any reply. But the old lady was soon to change her mind about the soldier chaps.

Mrs. Roberts was so old and feeble that her daughter occupied a room adjoining. One night, about midnight, Elizabeth was awakened by a loud pounding on the outside door. She jumped up, bewildered, threw on a wrapper, and went to the door.

"What is it?" she asked, before opening the door.

"Your house is on fire! Get up, quick!"

Terror-stricken, she unbolted the door and found one of the neighbors, who had discovered the fire as he was coming home late from town. One glance showed her that the long addition con-

necting the L with the stable was on fire at the farther end.

"Get your mother up quick, and I'll rouse the neighborhood and send Abel for help."

Rushing back, she aroused her mother, who at once showed her Puritan pluck. Never a word did she utter, but hurried on her clothes, assisted by her daughter. While they were doing this, they heard the clatter of horses' feet in the yard and knew that Abel had started on horseback for town to get the engine. When they got out into the yard a number of men had collected. A line was formed to the pump in the kitchen, and the buckets were quickly passed. There were so few men that the line proved short, and old lady Roberts hobbled to the pump, telling the man who was pumping to get into line. Then she her-

self took up the iron handle and worked away as though she were a boy of twenty. Her eyes blazed and flashed, and the water rushed and poured into the buckets. Elizabeth was in the line herself and did not see what her mother was doing. She supposed her safe in the yard.

It was soon found, however, that the fire had gained too good a start to be put out in this way, and they confined their efforts to trying to prevent its spreading to the main house. After what seemed ages, an engine came tearing out from town, and took up its position at a brook which crossed the road a short distance above the house. Then Elizabeth, ready to drop with fatigue, thought of her mother, and turned to the place where she had left her, but she was nowhere to be found. She now noticed

for the first time that the yard was full of blue-coated men, who were doing all they could to assist.

Becoming somewhat alarmed, she asked some of the neighbors about if they had seen her mother, and then she learned for the first time that the iron-willed old lady had pumped all the water she had been helping to pour on the fire. Without a word, she rushed to the kitchen, which was now full of smoke, but her mother was not there. Coughing and gasping in the sulphurous fumes, she felt her way to the bedroom, not knowing but that she might have come in here to rest, but in vain. She was now frantic and nearly overcome with the smoke, but she pushed on from room to room feeling her way, holding her dress to her mouth to prevent strangling. She called, "Mother! Mother!" but

no reply. She reached the dining-room, and pulled herself along by the table till she reached the sideboard; here her hand closed upon something mechanically, which she carried with her with a dim idea of saving something. Suddenly, all became blank to her, and she was sinking slowly to the floor, when she became dimly conscious of being seized by strong arms, and hurried out to the fresh air. She was partly conscious of being carried quite a distance, and of a door being opened, and of being laid down upon something, and then—joyful sound!—she heard her mother's voice speaking to her as from a distance. Was it a dream, a nightmare? Had there been no fire?

Gradually, she returned to consciousness and heard the murmur of voices around her. She opened her eyes a little

and recognized her mother sitting by her side, and saw that her dearest friend and neighbor was bathing her head, and she now recognized that it was to her house across the road that she had been carried. Her mother was safe. She cared for no more at present, and for some minutes she lay with closed eyes, listening to the voices. She perceived among the others which she knew so well, the deep tones of a man's voice, and wondered who it was. It seemed familiar, but she was too much dazed to think. Gradually, however, her senses, lately so numb, began to return. She opened her eyes slowly and looked about. The first thing she saw was her friend, Hester, and then her brave mother smiling at her. Then she looked around without raising her eyes and caught sight of a pair of blue army trousers. This attracted her atten-

tion, and she gazed more earnestly at them, and noticed with a start that the stripes on the sides were yellow, not white. She had not strength to raise her eyes higher to see who the owner was, but asked in a childish way,—

“What’s that?”

“What’s what, dear?”

“That,” and she pointed to the yellow striped trousers, standing immovable a few steps away.

“Well, Elizabeth, that’s hardly the way to speak of the man who saved your life. I don’t know the gentleman’s name, but he is one of the officers down at the camp ”

“Miss Roberts will, perhaps, remember me when she comes to herself. I met her at the State encampment last summer,” said the deep tones of the voice she had heard a short time since.

At the first sound of his voice Elizabeth sat bolt upright, conscious to the fullest degree, every sense tingling and the color rushing back to her face in a flood.

"You? You here?" she stammered. And then it all came over her like a flash that it was he who had carried her from the burning house, and she sank back on the sofa overcome with a delicious sense of pleasure and shame. In raising her hand to her face she struck herself with something hard. She looked at her hand to see what it was, and as she opened it a roar went up from all in the room, in which Elizabeth joined. In her hand she firmly clasped a small individual butter plate with a pat of butter still on it. This she had mechanically seized as she passed through the dining-room, and this was all she had saved from the wreck.

The ridiculousness of the whole thing somewhat relieved her embarrassment, and Captain Hubbard's presence was soon explained. It seems that the government wanted to see how the National Guard would acquit itself in actual service, and he, being still in Washington, had been sent to the scene of action to watch events and report. The fire had been early discovered by the guard, and all who could be spared were sent up to assist in quenching it. The captain had gone into the house to see if he could save anything, had found the old lady still at the pump, and, in spite of her remonstrances, had taken her in his arms and carried her to the nearest house. He had then returned just in time to see Elizabeth rush into the smoke-filled rooms. He followed, and came upon her just as she collapsed, and brought her out in his

arms. It all seemed very simple and easy as he told it, but his simplicity only gave more point and force to the bravery and readiness of the man.

Having told his story, he excused himself, saying that he would go back and see if there was anything else to be done. Elizabeth raised her head proudly to watch his tall figure as it went out of the door. What cared she for fires? She would have welcomed another at the same cost. This was worth the loss of all their buildings. She soon found, however, that the engine from town had subdued the flames after they had burned the L, and pretty well scorched the rear of the house.

It was several days before the house was habitable again, and in the meantime they stayed with their friends. Captain Hubbard called daily to see how they

were getting on. His calls were brief, and he seemed slightly embarrassed, but he was always courteous, though very reserved. As he walked slowly away Elizabeth would hurry to the window to catch a last glimpse as he disappeared down the hill towards the camp.

Finally their house was ready for them again, and it was with a feeling of delight that she moved back, for now she could watch the camp all day, and night too, if she chose. The strike showed no signs of abating, so the troops were still on duty. They were getting used to the life, and rather liked it.

One night, after Elizabeth had gotten her mother safely in bed, she went out into the cool evening air. The weather was still warm, and a clear, starlight night was not to be lost. A new moon was just peeping over the tops of the trees

down in the pasture. She passed out through the great barn, where the cattle were sleeping and occasionally knocking their horns against the stanchions or rattling their chains. The sweet odor of hay and clover came down from the mows, and followed her as she walked out of the wide-open door at the far end of the barn into the orchard. She hardly knew where she was going, she simply felt a strong desire to be out in the free, open air of night, where she could watch the stars. Her steps unconsciously led her towards the tents, which lay not far from the eastern limit of the orchard. Stopping, now and then, to watch the moon rising or to listen to the note of the cuckoo, which lived every summer in the big elm by the spring, she went farther than she had any idea of, and was brought suddenly to a standstill by a loud

"Halt! Who goes there?"

For a moment she was alarmed, but her wits soon returned, and, straining her eyes, she could distinguish the glimmer of a bayonet and the form of a big, burly guardsman a few feet away.

"I'm only Miss Roberts, who lives on the farm at the top of the hill."

"What ye doin' here at this time 'er night?"

"I just came out for a walk."

"That won't do, me leddy," and then before she could say a word, the big Irishman roared out,

"Corporal of the guard, number thirteen."

And down the whole line from sentry to sentry went rolling the cry, "Corporal of the guard, number thirteen," till it was lost in the distance. Elizabeth was desperate. Here she was in the power of

this stupid guard, and likely to be put to considerable inconvenience. It was all too ridiculous, and she tried to explain to the sentry that she could not possibly do any harm or be connected in any way with the strike.

"Ye's can talk to the corp'ral," he said.
"They told me to stop every one and holler for the corp'ral, and I done it."

It seemed useless to say more under the circumstances, so she remained silent in hopes that the "Corp'ral" might be a man of much larger intelligence. Pretty soon he came up on the run, and much out of breath, to see what the trouble was.

The sentry was in the midst of his explanations when a voice right at her elbow startled Elizabeth nearly out of her wits, and at the same time thrilled her through and through.

"It's all right, Corporal. I know the

young lady, and will be responsible for her."

The corporal came to "attention," touched his cap, and said,

"Very well, sir. Sentry, let the lady pass!"

The Irishman brought his piece to a carry, and sauntered off down his post, muttering. The corporal disappeared in the darkness towards the guard tent, and the owner of the deep voice came out of the shadow, and raised his cap.

"I trust you have not been annoyed," he said; "it was stupid of the sentry to call for the corporal."

"You always seem to appear at the right moment," answered Elizabeth, laughing in an embarrassed manner. "It was so careless in me straying into the lines at this time of night. You seemed to come out of the ground."

"Oh, it was a mere coincidence. I usually make the rounds of the posts every night after 'retreat' to see how well the men are doing their duty. The greatest trouble I have found so far with them is an excess of zeal. I heard this post called, and came along to see what the trouble was. Now, will you permit me to escort you to the house?"

"Thank you, Captain, you are always most kind."

They walked slowly along, up the hill, through the orchard, neither speaking for some time. When they reached the summit, they stopped to look back, and the scene that lay before them was a fascinating one. The moon had risen, and the valley was bathed in its soft light. It glistened on the river, winding along in the far distance, and upon the white tents near at hand. The woods down in

the pasture looked deep and dark, and cast long shadows on the fields of clover nestling up against them. A solitary camp-fire was still smoldering in front of the commanding officer's tent, and a lonely figure could be seen sitting by it.

"Do you see that camp-fire and that solitary figure?" asked the captain. "How many, many nights I have sat like that out on the wide plains when all had turned in, and nothing broke the stillness but the mournful note of the coyotes. It's a lonesome life, Miss Roberts."

"It must be, but, nevertheless, it has its fascinations. It can't be much more lonesome than life upon a farm. You, at least, have adventures and change."

"So do you, it seems," replied the captain, laughing quietly.

"I did n't, till you —— "

And then Elizabeth stopped, got con-

fused, and was silent for a moment. Then, suddenly, as though reaching out for something to help her out of the difficult position, she exclaimed,

“But, I want to explain to you about the butter plate.”

“Never mind about the butter plate just now,” said the captain in a low voice.
“I want to ask you a serious question.”

His hand played with the hilt of his sword for a moment, and then he turned squarely towards her and said,

“I have nothing but my pay as a captain, and a reasonable chance of promotion. Will you share the pay, and take the chance of promotion? You can then try the life for yourself.”

“Captain Hubbard, —” and Elizabeth’s voice trembled with a glad joy as she spoke, “you have made me very happy by your offer, but you must not

forget that I am an old maid, that I have spent the best years of my life in hard work, and that I have few, if any, of the graces and talents that make a woman attractive. Further than that, my dear mother needs all my care, and I give it to her lovingly."

"Elizabeth, I will match my youth spent in hard service on the frontier against yours. You have given your youth to your mother, and I have given mine to my country and my profession. As for the graces and talents, you have those that any woman in the world might be proud of. Your mother is the kindest, grandest old Puritan that I have ever seen, and I should count it a privilege to add my love to yours in trying to smooth the sunset days of her life."

A sob rose in Elizabeth's throat, and

the tears to her eyes, as she replied, half crying and half laughing,—

“ Mother thinks I am still a girl ; so, if you want me, you must ask her ;” and, before he could realize what she was doing, she had kissed him on the forehead and was half-way to the house.

The next time I saw Elizabeth she was mending a fatigue coat with yellow shoulder straps on it.

THE BISHOP'S FIFTH.

We first saw her as she was walking by the house one day, and then only saw her back. I asked Ruth who she was, but Ruth said she was a new arrival and, as yet, unknown. I was struck by the way she carried herself.

The next time we saw her was on the beach, at the bathing hour. We were sitting on the rocks, out of reach of the waves, watching the bathers as they went in and out and the promenaders on the sand. I was watching a fellow who was trying to see how long he could stay under water, when Ruth said :

“Here comes your beauty.”

She was approaching from the other end of the beach, alone and unattended. This did not seem to embarrass her, nor did the many admiring glances which were cast her way. Her carriage was graceful to a degree, and she looked about her with a frank, unterrified manner that was very interesting. When she got near enough I found she had just the firm, strong features which I expected to see. A sad face, beautiful and interesting.

"Do n't stare her out of countenance," said Ruth.

"She's worth staring at. Wonder who she is."

"Oh! I don't know. Some bird of passage. Look at Mary Hastings out in that canoe with the Brown boys."

"Deering is coming Saturday. Bet you a pound of Huyler's he falls in love with her at sight."

"Who, Mary Hastings?"

"No, no, the Unknown."

"Pooh! Nothing remarkable about her, and you know how retiring Deering is. Why he has n't spoken to a woman for three years."

"All the more reason why he will fall in love with the Unknown. Somehow, I feel as though she would attract him."

"Well, I hope she won't. What do we know about her? Besides, I have other plans for Deering."

"Oh, that's it."

Deering was my most intimate friend, but I had n't seen him for years. He had been out at Fort Bennett in North Dakota for three years, and was coming home on furlough. Belonged to the —th cavalry. He was also a great friend of Ruth's, and we had made all sorts of plans for him.

"Now, do n't you try to get Deering into trouble, Max."

"How could I? I don't know the woman. Besides, I shall let him discover her himself."

I hardly knew him when he reached us Saturday night. When I parted with him he had just graduated at West Point, and was a pale, slender fellow. Now, he was filled out, though he had not an ounce of superfluous flesh, and every muscle and sinew seemed developed. His life in the saddle and open air had given him that perfect command of his movements which is the despair of all civilians. His flesh was the shade of a golden russet apple, and gave you the feeling that the tan must have penetrated to the bone. His clear gray eyes looked out keenly from under his over-hanging brow, and the deep lines radiating from the corners were a re-

minder of the blinding sun of the plains and the glare of the unshaded sand.

The next day was Sunday, and we went down on the rocks as usual at twelve to see the Sunday parade. It is the custom for all the summer visitors to go to church, and then, after service, to promenade up and down the beach in their best ginghams and fal-fals. It makes a pretty picture, taken with the gay colors of the bathing dresses, the blue of the sea, the golden sand, and the gray rocks. It is also a great relief after a sleepy sermon.

I kept an eye out for the Unknown. She was there, though very quietly dressed. But then, it mattered not what she wore. She walked up and down, still all by herself. She seemed to know no one, and no person knew her. This I knew, for I had inquired,—of course without letting Ruth know it.

I was curious to see if Deering would notice her. He was deeply interested in the scene, and I covertly watched him. So did Ruth, for we had a bet on it.

At last, by chance, she passed very close to us, and I saw Deering's eyes open wide and follow her. I chuckled quietly to myself and nudged Ruth. Up and down she went, and up and down went Deering's eyes, keenly, intently following her. I was surprised that he did not say something about her, or ask who she was, but he always was infernally retiring and secretive. Right in the midst of it he caught Ruth watching him, blushed a deep red under the tan, and never looked towards her again.

We noticed Deering was always impatient to get down to the beach at the bathing hour, and, when sitting on the

piazza, was always keenly alert to any one passing in the street.

"It's working," I told Ruth. "How am I to get them acquainted."

"You just let him alone," answered Ruth. "Rachel Davis will be here in a few days, and you know I am bent on his marrying her."

"Rachel Davis will come too late, my love. He's head over ears in love with the Unknown."

"I call it real mean in you!"

"What have I done? I have n't mentioned her to him."

"You have, too. It's this psychological thingumy, this will-power, whatever you call it. You willed him, and he's fallen into the trap. The truth is, you've fallen in love with her yourself, and because you could n't have her you are bound Deering shall. Oh, it's all your

fault and, if she turns out an adventuress and ruins the best friend you've got, it will serve you just right."

"Can't see how I'm to bring them together, my dear."

"You won't get any help from me, I tell you that."

But fate, or psychology, fixed it.

The next day we went in bathing, and so did the Unknown. I was standing in the water, talking to Deering between swims, when she came walking down the beach. I think I never saw anything quite so becoming as her close-fitting bathing dress. Her figure lost nothing by its paucity of skirts.

Deering saw her, too, and followed her with his eyes as she plunged into a great roller. Many anxious and admiring eyes were fixed upon her, for she had become sort of a sphinx. The women watched,

ready to criticise, and the men ready to praise. Could she swim? was the question. It was soon settled. She rose from her header, shook the water from her eyes and hair, and with long, steady strokes, indicating the practised swimmer, struck out for deep water.

"Oh!" said I. "Pooh!" said Ruth. Nothing, said Deering, just watched.

Out and out she went, and I was amused, on looking around, to find that nearly every one was standing still in the water watching the swimmer.

Where is she going? was the question. Would she never turn? I began to feel a little nervous, and Deering's muscles were twitching.

At last I saw what she was up to. Way out at the entrance to the harbor was a jagged pile of rocks, a small island at low tide, a wall of breakers at high tide; a

menace to vessels at any stage. She was making a bee line for these rocks. Now there were several good swimmers at the beach, but I had never seen a man try this, much less a woman, and unattended. It was a bold, not to say a reckless, act, and I was alarmed. We all stood watching, wondering, querying whether we ought not to call her back or get a boat and go after her. No boat, however, was at hand. Suddenly, I saw a head rising and falling on the swell a few yards out, and between the Unknown and ourselves, and turning to speak to Deering, found that he had disappeared. He had quietly slipped under water, swimming clear of the people, then coming to the surface, had followed the bold girl.

Steadily and strongly, with no hesitation or looking back, and as though unconscious of the excitement and alarm she

was creating, her muscular arms bore her towards the rock, while some distance behind her, hardly moving at all, was Deering. I saw in a minute what his plan was. He did not feel sure but the girl was perfectly equal to the swim out and back, and did not wish to be made ridiculous by offering unneeded assistance. Still, there was enough danger to warrant his being near at hand; so he was swimming and floating, keeping himself as much out of sight as possible.

Well, to our great relief, she reached the rock safely, climbed up, and sat down; and you ought to have seen the people hustle to appear not to have been watching.

She sat there for a while, and I don't think she noticed Deering, who was about half way out, floating quietly like a watchful sentinel. When she felt rested

enough, she slipped into the water again.

But what is she up to now? Instead of turning towards shore, she strikes out to the left, where the river runs in. This gave us a start, for the river makes a strong current when the tide is running out, and it takes a powerful swimmer to breast it. We tried to call her, but she could not hear us. I looked for Deering, and saw him swimming vigorously now. I knew him to be a powerful fellow and a tireless swimmer, and felt if she could be saved he would do it.

She reached the current, swam a short distance in it, found it strong, turned about, and with a few powerful strokes drew herself away from the danger, and then headed back to the beach, now a long way off.

Deering and she were now approach-

ing each other rapidly, and we drew a breath of relief. But our relief was turned to terror and dismay when we saw Deering begin to swim hard and plunge wildly. What could be the matter? There were no sharks here. At the same moment we saw the Unknown fairly tear through the water with great overhand strokes. Deering seemed to be struggling to keep his head above water, and just as he was about to sink, she reached him.

She did not touch him, but swam near him, and the next we saw was his hand resting on her shoulder, she swimming steadily towards the shore, while he simply floated at her side. It was a glorious sight, and women wept and men said,—“*Damnation, but she's a trump!*” Already several men besides myself were on our way to his assistance, but she had him well in before we reached her, and

could claim all the credit. By the time we came up with her Deering was beginning to recover himself, and a few minutes after his feet touched bottom. He looked pained, hurt, terribly mortified. I saw her say a few words to him (what they were I never knew); then she turned and walked quietly out of the water and up to her bath-house as though nothing had happened.

Deering turned to me, his face flushed, and said simply,—“Cramp;” then he walked out of the water, ignoring the sympathizing words of the men and the glances of the girls.

Here was a sensation for one morning.

As soon as I could, I got into my clothes, and went out to Ruth, who was boiling with excitement. Before she could open her mouth, I said,—

“Well, I've got them introduced.”

"I should think you had, and nearly killed him in doing it."

"But, was n't she splendid? Did n't I tell you she was a grand woman? You can't deceive me in faces."

"I suppose it was brave enough; but what did she want to go swimming out there for, leading men to risk their lives?"

"Why, I suppose she knew what she could do, and did n't think of any one's following her."

"Pooh! Do n't believe it. It was all on purpose. She's bound to have him."

"That's ridiculous, I do n't suppose she ever noticed him till the moment she placed his hand on her shoulder."

Just then Deering joined us, walking languidly, as though tired.

Ruth was about to say something, when he interrupted her.

"Do n't say anything about it. I've made an ass of myself, and tried to save a girl who could give us all lessons in swimming; made a fiasco of it, and had to be hauled ashore myself."

We saw by the expression of his face that he was terribly mortified, and still there was an exultant gleam in his eye that told a story, too.

Our bedroom window gives upon the beach, and I always look out on the water the first thing in the morning, to see what kind of a day it is to be. The next morning I looked out as usual.

"Ruth," I called, "come here and see this."

She jumped out of bed, looked out of the window, and said,—

"The brazen hussy!"

Deering was walking up and down the

beach with the Unknown. They were in earnest conversation.

From that time we saw very little of Deering. He was walking, conversing, sailing, or riding with the Unknown, to the great scandal of Ruth and all the women, but to my delight. Strange to say, he never mentioned her to us, and we were as much in the dark as ever. Deering would start to take one of these jaunts with a lame excuse or a shame-faced smile. I watched him narrowly; and while I could see he was eagerly, feverishly in love, I did not think him happy. At times his face wore a very troubled look, and he seemed to be working away at some problem, and would tug at his mustache and walk the floor.

As days went by, he became more and more despondent and reserved; still, he was with her half the time, and was of no



167

earthly use to us, as, when he was away from this strange woman, he was so absorbed that it was impossible to carry on a conversation with him. Rachel Davis arrived; but Ruth's hopes were quickly blasted, for, beyond being formally polite, he was hopelessly indifferent to her, and she was an attractive girl, too. It was no use. He was irretrievably lost, and I began to get a little nervous myself. Suppose it should not turn out well? I knew it would be a very serious matter for my friend.

Ruth was vexed, because he didn't introduce us to the girl and give us her history; while I felt a trifle sore myself, though pretending not to care, to Ruth. But, this was all arranged. It happened in this way:

One morning, Deering, who had become more and more despondent, and

who was perceptibly losing flesh and his tan, had gone off alone for a solitary walk and think, I suppose. Ruth and I went to the beach, as usual. Ruth had on a very fetching gown, but was out of sorts, worried about my friend, and consequently lost the admiring glances thrown her way, a thing she would not have done had she been herself.

Just about the turn of the tide I noticed the Unknown walking down the cliff-walk towards the beach. She is going to bathe, I thought, and lazily watched her. But, instead of going to her bath-house, she shaded her eyes with her hand, and gazed up and down the beach. Probably looking for Deering, I thought.

She seemed to find what she sought, for she came swiftly down the beach and straight toward us. Can she be about to speak to us? I wondered.

She stopped just in front of us, looked me straight in the face with those glorious eyes, and said quietly,—

“ I should like to speak to you, Mr. Archer. Pardon me, Mrs. Archer;” and with a magnificent dignity she turned away, indicating that I was to accompany her. Of course I went, but I nearly exploded at the expression on Ruth’s face, and almost expected to feel a rock come hurtling after us.

The Unknown led the way to a retired seat at the top of the beach, away from the crowd, without speaking a word. Motioning me to sit down, she placed herself beside me. I waited expectantly, and was secretly delighted at the whole thing.

“ You think me a strange woman, and Mrs. Archer disapproves of and is suspicious of me—please not interrupt—and apparently with good reason. However,

I think *you* are charitable, and willing to give me the benefit of the doubt. Ordinarily your opinion, the opinion of people in general, is of no importance to me ; but, for certain reasons, I wish to right myself in your eyes, and I want you to right me in the eyes of another."

I bowed in acquiescence, and looked deep into the violet eyes.

"I came here a stranger, desiring no acquaintances, wishing to be alone ; but fate brought me in contact with your friend. You know the result. He has, unfortunately, fallen in love with me."

"Pardon me, is it returned?"

She thought for a moment, then looked me fairly in the eyes, and said simply,—

"Yes."

There were tears on her cheeks, and her bosom heaved for a few minutes ; but, mastering herself, she went on,—

"I come to you, as his dearest friend, to confess. I could not tell him. It was impossible. My story is so strange.

"For weeks I have known of his love, indeed, ever since the swimming incident, and for some time he has known that his love was returned; but he has not been able to draw from me a confession of why I would not marry him, and he is miserable, dejected, and broken. You must tell him the truth. That is why I have sought you out. 'I love him with all my heart and soul. He is a noble man, and I know he loves me, but I cannot marry him.'

"Why?"

"I am a Mormon. Don't draw away. I am not tainted in any way, and am a pure woman. I will tell you my story.

"My father was a younger son of a wealthy English family. He was poor

and proud—would not ask his family for assistance. One day he fell in with one of the Mormon agents, and was induced to come to Salt Lake City and join the church. He became a thorough follower of Brigham Young, and very rich. I was reared in luxury, sent away to school, and well educated. Soon after my return to Salt Lake my father died, leaving me all his money. I was sought after by a number of the leading men of the church, perhaps for myself, perhaps for my money. I declined them; but there was one, a bishop in the church, who made up his mind to have me, and one day I was forcibly carried away, drugged, and married to this man by the 'sealing' process of the church. As soon as I recovered consciousness I rushed from the house to some Gentile friends, who helped me to escape from the city, and I

came here, to be as far away as possible from my disgrace. My wants have been supplied by my lawyer. You see, therefore, that I am not a wife, though married; but there is a barrier between me and your friend which is insurmountable;" and her head sank on her breast.

To say I was startled, would faintly express it. I was indignant, and filled with pity, too. That this good, pure, beautiful woman should be made the victim of such a conspiracy was monstrous. But what could be done?

"Will you explain it to him, and not give him too black a picture of me? I value his respect, if I cannot have his love."

"Trust me. What are your plans?"

"I shall leave here tomorrow, and he will not see me again."

"Stay till next week. I have a special reason for asking it."

"What can it do but harm?"

"Stay because I ask it. I am your friend."

"Well," she replied, with a sad, wearied look.

"One question. Had the man, this bishop, other previous wives?"

"No; he informed me I was his first and only one. If he had other ones, I should not consider myself his wife, as it is contrary to the laws of the land, and I was forced to the ceremony. Besides, I am a wife only in name."

"Ah! It is agreed that you do not leave till next week?"

"If you wish it."

I returned to Ruth in deep thought. The Unknown went back to her hotel.

It is needless to say I had a scene with Mrs. A., and the fact that I gave her no information only added fuel to the fire.

For the next few days Miss Davis, poor Deering, and I had to catch it.

During my conversation with the Unknown, it had occurred to me that I had a very intimate friend and business agent in Salt Lake City, one who was thoroughly in the secrets of the church, and that night I sent him a three-sheet telegram.

I awaited the answer impatiently, for my home was anything but happy. Deering was in abject misery, Miss Davis was in the dumps, and my wife wore a face that would throw a locomotive off the track. I wanted it settled.

On the second day my answer came.

When the boy brought it, Deering and the Unknown were sitting in a vine-covered arbor near the house. Miss Davis was away driving with a friend, and Ruth was reading on the piazza. I

opened it with a good deal of trepidation, while my wife looked at me curiously. It was as follows :

“ Miss Ainsley was illegally married to Bishop Airlee, who has four other wives living ; she disappeared on the day of marriage. Miss A. is a girl of excellent family, and a pure and good woman every way.”

Putting my arm around Ruth’s waist, I drew her into the library and told her the story, finishing by showing her the telegram.

When she finished it she was in tears, and I saw the victory was won. The Unknown had another ally.

“ What are you going to do ? ” Ruth asked in a whisper.

“ Watch me.”

I took a pair of tongs from the fireplace, and grasped the telegram between

them. Then, motioning Ruth to follow, I cautiously approached the arbor. The occupants were hidden by the foliage, but we thought we could hear suppressed sobs.

I poked my tongs with the telegram through the leaves near where I supposed them to be sitting, and, after a moment, drew them back. The telegram was gone.

We waited a moment. There was an exclamation, and then silence.

"Hark! Did you hear anything, Ruth?"

"Yes; I heard something like this," and she gave me a hurried kiss and ran for the house.

THE MAGIC FLASK.

The War of the Rebellion was well under way ; the clash of contending armies filled the air ; the papers teemed with long reports of battles, and projected movements of troops ; companies were being enlisted, and men were drilling from one end of this broad land to the other ; stern men were girding on the armor of battle, while women wept at the fireside, and children were pressed tightly to aching hearts.

In our quiet home on the banks of the Connecticut the sound of war reached us as a distant echo, but that echo was enough to arouse all the manliness there

was in the sturdy farmers, and, already, a large proportion of the youth and strength of the neighborhood had gone to the front. I still lingered, held back by the thought of my widowed mother and by Isabel. My better nature, my pride, and my patriotism urged me to go, and, perhaps, I should have enlisted before this had it not been for the fact that I knew Henry Branfield also loved Isabel. As yet, Isabel had given no sign as to her preference, and neither dared leave the other an open field.

Henry and I had grown up together; had attended the village school; fished in the summer, and skated in the winter as companions, and if any one knew how manly and true he was, I was that man, and I was therefore all the more fearful of his success if left to himself. I have no doubt that he was influenced by the same

fears, and for the same reasons had not enlisted. So we lagged behind, feeling ashamed to look our neighbors in the face, each longing to go to the front, but daring not.

Isabel, herself, would occasionally throw out grave hints that we were not doing our duty, and I would resolve to enlist the next day, but the sight of Henry coming from the house would put my good resolutions to flight.

One day, Henry and I were standing in front of the village store in the hot July sunshine, reading the latest news from the seat of war, when an old man, upwards of sixty, came walking slowly towards us, covered with dust, and wiping the perspiration from his rugged brow. He was past his prime, and his steps were weary and heavy, but his face was expressive of determination and resolve. Stopping

before us, he asked if we could tell him where the nearest recruiting station was.

Somewhat surprised, we told him that they were recruiting a company at Wells, a few miles away, and asked him the purport of his errand.

"I'm going to enlist," he said, and a flush came to his cheek, and his eye sparkled with light. "I'm not too old to sight a musket yet."

Henry and I looked at each other as the old veteran dragged his weary way towards Wells, and, when he had disappeared around a curve in the road, my comrade exclaimed,—

"Maynard, we are cowards!"

"I know it," I replied.

"I shall go to Wells to-morrow, and join the 13th New Hampshire," he added.

"I will go with you!" and we shook .

hands, and each went his way to make his preparations, with pale face, but stern resolve. Each knew that the other had a leave-taking to go through with that night, and neither wished to interfere with the other. I watched him enter the lilac-shaded door, and, after a space of twenty minutes, come out again with bowed head, and disappear in the twilight. I then left my post by the river, and, with beating heart, sought my fate. I left the house as I had entered it, no wiser, no nearer my goal. Isabel would make no promises, but simply gave me god-speed and her prayers. With this I had to be content.

The 13th was recruited, the ranks were filled, and, after weeks of drilling and preparation at the central depot of the regiment, we were forwarded to the front. Then began the rough life for which we

had enlisted. Weary marches, poor food, sleepless nights on the bare, wet ground, stubbornly fought battles, dreary picket duty, and all the hardships of real warfare. Henry and I had joined the army with no misapprehensions of what it meant, and by steady attention to duty and earnest application, we received promotion. I became captain of my company, and Henry earned the straps of a major.

Though we were in several bloody battles, we both escaped serious injury until the battle of Antietam. During a charge participated in by our regiment, Henry, who was one of the first over the breastworks, was mortally wounded. He was carried back by his men, and we buried him that night, by the light of torches.

If he had won Isabel's love he carried it to the grave with him, for he never revealed it to me. I felt lonely after his

death, and longed for the war to end, but it was many a long month before we were finally mustered out, and returned to our distant homes, many of us wrecks of what we had been.

I found Isabel a little more matured, a little more quiet, with a trace of new gravity in her eyes, but otherwise the same sweet girl I had left. It was two years, however, before she consented to become my wife.

This is the prologue to my story—a not very uncommon incident of the war; but its sequel was very strange, so strange, in fact, that I sometimes doubt my sanity. It happened this way.

In the summer of 1882 I had occasion to go to New York on business. I was strolling up Broadway one pleasant afternoon, looking curiously at the throngs of people, when I stumbled against a man,

who was, probably, as absent minded as I. Turning to apologize, I staggered back with blanched face, for there, gravely begging my pardon for his awkwardness, was Henry Branfield. He did not seem surprised at all, and quietly said,—

“ How do you do, Maynard? How are the people at home?” He held out his hand and clasped mine. I could not utter a word to save my life; my mouth was dry and parched. I simply stared, feeling faint and sick. I had seen this man shot down, carried to the rear, he had breathed his last in my arms, and I had assisted at his burial, and thrown the last shovelful of earth upon his grave, and still, here he stood talking with me as though we had parted the day before. At last I managed to gasp,—

“ What does this mean! You were killed at Antietam! I saw you buried!”

"Quite possibly ; but come to my rooms where we can talk without interruption."

I followed him as one in a dream, trying to cipher out how we could have been mistaken, and endeavoring to account for his presence in the flesh. I fell a little behind him so as to look him over. I could not see that he had changed a particle from the day I had last seen him alive, before the battle of Antietam. His figure was just as erect, his face wore the same look of stern determination, while not a gray hair silvered his head. He walked steadily on without attempting to talk to me, simply looking around occasionally to see if I followed. If it had been dark, I think I should have cut and run, but it seemed too foolish to think of anything supernatural right on Broadway, and among the throngs of people.

I put the idea out of my mind as ridiculous, and followed my leader with the expectation of having it all explained when we reached his rooms.

He took me up Broadway a short distance, and then branched off into a side street, and on and on through a labyrinth of narrow streets and alleys, until we reached a stone building three stories high, in a street I had never visited before, and which seemed far away from the noise and bustle of the city, for not a soul was stirring about, and no teams were passing—in fact the street seemed deserted, most of the houses having closed blinds and an air of non-occupancy. He opened the door with a pass key, and led the way up a broad stone stair-case to the first floor. There was something very odd about the entrance to the house. It had no resemblance to New York houses, or to Ameri-

can houses at all. It was more like some of the houses in Hamburg.

When we reached the first floor, he opened a door at the right, and motioned me to walk in. By this time I was feeling very ill at ease, and I entered the doorway with some trepidation, not knowing what was in store for me. The sight that met my eyes was one to add another to the list of surprises which had staggered me that day. The room into which I was ushered was of such magnificence that I could hardly believe my eyes, coming from the mean and narrow street. The room was a large one, indeed almost a hall, for it took in the whole upper part of the building, the ceiling being at least thirty feet high. There were no windows in the sides, but the roof was dome-shaped, and the sun penetrated through stained glass windows in the top of the dome. The

rays as they filtered through the beautifully colored glass, gave a weird, yet sensuous light, which but added to my uncanny feeling. The walls were hung with the most exquisite tapestries, evidently the fruit of long foreign search, while around the room, directly under the dome, was a frieze of satyrs chasing nymphs through a wilderness of roses, executed in warm colors, and evidently by the hand of an artist of merit.

The furniture of the room was equally striking. There was not an article which showed American workmanship, but all of it was of foreign make, and chiefly of Indian or Moorish appearance. The wood was dark old mahogany, rich with age, while the upholstering was of the richest velvets, camels' hair, and cashmere. At the far end was a great ebony side-board covered with strange shaped bottles and

flasks in cut glass, many of them bound in silver. The floor was entirely hidden by rich skins of all descriptions, into which the foot sank luxuriously. Broad divans, and curious arm chairs were scattered about, and here and there were odd pieces of bric-a-brac and bits of old armor, while the walls held several paintings which, even to my inexperienced eye, were the work of a master.

Henry motioned me to a seat, and began walking up and down as though he had completely forgotten my presence. For some reason I did not feel like interrupting him, and some time passed in this way. Suddenly, however, he stopped right in front of me, and said,—

“ You married Isabel?”

“ Yes, two years after the war closed.”

Then he began to pace the floor again. Unable to stand the strain longer, I sprang

to my feet, stopping him in his walk, and exclaimed,—

“ Henry, for God’s sake tell me whether you are flesh and blood! Explain this thing to me ! I can’t stand it any longer.”

A sad smile passed slowly over his face, the first one I had seen upon it, and he replied,—

“ Have you not felt my hand, am I not talking to you, do I look like a ghost?”

“ But how shall I reconcile this with the fact that I helped bury you?”

“ Oh ! I do n’t attempt to do that. I leave that for you to do, Maynard.”

“ But are you not going to tell me how you escaped, and how you happen to be alive, and living here in this strange way?”

“ No,” said he, wearily, “ I do n’t care to talk of things so recent. I want to go back into the past, back to the war, and beyond. That’s where I live, that’s

where I think. I brought you here simply to lead me back into the past. I mean to use you simply as a chain to connect me with days gone by. But, excuse me, I am forgetting my manners. Take some of this. It is good, I assure you."

While he was saying this he went to the sideboard, and took down a strangely shaped flask. The flask looked black when he first held it up, but as I watched it, I saw threads of fire stealing up and down the sides, and curling sinuously around the neck. It was bound with silver of very curious workmanship. After looking at it, as I imagined, fondly, for a moment, he poured out a small wine glass full of reddish, amber-colored liquid, and offered it to me, pouring out another for himself. I hesitated to drink it, but he looked at me intently, keeping his deep eyes firmly fixed on

mine as he raised his own glass to his lips. As though fascinated, I followed his example, and the moment it touched my lips my hesitation vanished, for it was like a breath from heaven. Such an exquisitely overpowering perfume arose from it that I drank it eagerly. It seemed to pervade my whole body in the twinkling of an eye, and I looked regretfully at the bottom of the empty glass. He saw the look, and, without saying a word, filled the glass again. The effect was magical; instead of making me torpid and dull, the usual effect of liquor, it acted as a powerful stimulant to all my faculties, and I seemed to have many times the brain power that I ordinarily possessed. I felt capable of grasping any subject, of solving any question; abstruse problems on which I had pondered for days appeared as

simple as the alphabet, and I felt that the enigma of life itself would not be beyond my reach, if given time. I tried several difficult problems in calculus mentally, and solved them without difficulty. All this, which it takes minutes to write about, occupied but a few brief moments, and I was still testing my wonderful brain power when Henry's voice aroused me. I looked up from my reverie, and saw him standing before me, but not as he had been before. He was now dressed in the full uniform of a major, the very uniform in which we had buried him, even to his sword. He held something in his hand which he was softly stroking, and on looking at it closely, I saw that it was a lock of hair.

"Do you see this, Maynard," he began; "this is a lock of Isabel's hair. I loved her with a love you never dreamed of.

Mine was a love which would not only sacrifice all the world on its altar, but would cast itself into the flames. You do not understand me, I see, and it does not matter; I am not talking to you, but to myself, and for my own gratification. One gets tired of the silence and the gloom."

He hesitated for a moment, and I stared at him with wide-open eyes of amazement and fear. My brain power utterly failed me here. I began to mistrust myself, and him, more and more. At last he went on slowly and deliberately, and without seeming to pay much attention to me, all the time softly stroking the lock of hair.

"Yes, I loved her a hundred times more than you were capable of loving, and I am going to tell you a secret, Maynard. One that she has never re-

vealed to you. She loved me, Maynard. Did you know that? And she thinks of me sometimes at dusk now, when the stars come out, and the birds have gone to bed, and watches for a boat to cross the river, one that never comes. She loved me, and sometimes, when I get very low, I use this lock of hair to conjure with. Would you like to see me do it?"

I was speechless, and I do not think he expected any reply. Without waiting for one, he apparently laid the lock of hair down in the air, as though there were something for it to rest upon, and it remained just where he put it, about three feet from the floor. Then, he took the two ends of the lock in his hands and joined them, making a circle. Leaving the hair resting in the air he went to the sideboard and brought the strange

flask from which he had poured the liquor, which had excited my brain. From this he poured a tiny stream through the circle of hair upon the floor. Immediately, a bluish smoke arose, circling around the hair in delicate rings; vivid flashes of soft, rosy light shot through the vapor and disappeared among the curling wreaths in the dome of the room. This continued for some moments, while Henry stood a little to one side watching intently. The room gradually became filled with the same subtle odor which I had experienced in drinking.

As I gazed with startled brain, it seemed to me that the vapor was taking form, and watching more intently, I was sure that out of the mist a human form was slowly, but steadily, developing before my eyes. Gradually, it took the

shape of a woman, a young woman in all her maiden beauty, and more than that, a woman whose every lineament was engraved upon my heart. Her head was thrown back, her lips parted, and a sweet smile played about her mouth as she gazed tenderly at Henry, not at me; her long chestnut hair hung in loose masses over her white arms and bosom, which gleamed like ivory in the sensuous light.

I could not utter a word, but I stretched my arms towards her in mute appeal. It was useless. Not a glance did she give me; her eyes were fixed with loving appeal upon Henry, who stood with folded arms a few paces away, his soul in his eyes, and a look of fierce, proud love upon his face. Not a muscle moved, but he seemed to be drinking in the scene with every faculty

he possessed, and his lips moved gently, though no sound issued. I seemed to be utterly unheeded, utterly out of place, and of no importance. A fierce anger rushed over me like a hot wave, but I was powerless to move hand or foot, or to cry out, and I simply lay back in my chair breathing heavily, and overcome by a nameless terror.

I do not know how long the shape lasted, it seemed minutes, but, at last, it began to change; it first became ghastly white, and disappeared as it came, vanishing in the mists. The vapors too disappeared in the high dome of the room, and nothing was left but the lock of hair. With a sigh, Henry let his arms fall to his side, walked forward and seized the lock of hair, and untwined the ends, holding it wistfully in the palm of his hand. With the disappearance of the mists and

the phantom, I recovered in a measure my powers, and my anger gave me strength. I sprang to my feet, and rushed towards him, exclaiming,—

“ Give me that lock of hair ! You have no right to it ! ”

He laughed a sardonic, soul-piercing laugh, and, holding the hair out towards me, said,—

“ Very well, take it.”

I took the lock of hair in my hand, but the moment it touched me I felt a strange and terrible shock go through me, as though I had touched a live wire. I tried to drop it, but could not get it out of my hand, around which it twined and wound itself, and I felt cold lead running in my veins instead of warm blood. I could tell the exact course of every vein and artery in my body by the chilled blood which coursed through them. I looked down at

the lock of hair in terror, and then at Henry for help, but he stood there eyeing me indifferently, with that mocking smile still playing about his mouth.

I sank into my chair, and tried to pull off the silky threads with my free hand, but I could no more move them than if they had been bands of steel ; and, horror upon horrors, they began to penetrate my flesh ! Every hair separated from every other hair, and began to weave itself in and out through my arm with a stinging, cutting sensation. I could feel them creeping slowly up my arm towards my heart, and I felt if they reached there I was a dead man. I turned to Henry speechless, but imploring, and he came nearer, seeming to watch for the fatal moment to arrive. Streams of ice-cold perspiration coursed down my face, my eyes were starting from my head, and I

began to pray inarticulately. The stinging pains were just above my heart, and I felt that the next moment was to be my last, when Henry, who was bending over me, watching me intently, said,—

“ Come ! ”

The effect of this simple word was magical ; the pains began to recede, and pass downwards through the arm, as they had entered, and, gradually, the soft threads of silky hair appeared on the surface and coiled themselves into their former shape in my palm. Henry quietly took the lock from my hand, and went towards the sideboard. The moment his back was turned I summoned all my energies, and with a powerful effort of the will infused life enough into my palsied frame to rush for the door. As I tottered through it, I heard a low,

mocking laugh behind me, but I dared not look back. I fell most of the way down the cold stone staircase, and dragged myself through the entrance to the open air. But, I did not stop there. Helping myself by the fences I staggered along, not daring to rest nor look back until I came to a drug store. I asked for brandy, which rallied me somewhat, and after a rest, I was able to find a cab which took me to my hotel.

When, days after, I was able to leave my bed and return to my home, I found my wife just as I had left her, the same dear, true, yet grave woman.

Since that time I have several times tried to find the street, the locality, the house to which I was conducted, but in vain, and the question, "Is Henry Branfield alive, and if not, what did I encoun-

ter that summer day?" is as much a mystery to me to-day as it was when that shining form took shape among the mist wreaths, or as it is to you.

THE END.



